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ENGLISH

NONCONFORMITY.

BY

ROBERT VAUGHAN, D.D.

LONDON:

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MDCCCLXII.

P R E F A C E.

THE EXODUS of nearly two thousand ministers from their cures in the Church of England, as an act of fidelity to conscience in 1662, was an event fraught with weighty lessons to the Christian, and which should not be without interest to the Philosopher and the Statesman.

In the autumn of last year the Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales resolved to convene an assembly of pastors and delegates from the different parts of the kingdom, to deliberate on what should be done in commemoration of that event. One decision of that assembly was, that a volume should be issued on that chapter in our national history, considered in its relation to our earlier ecclesiastical annals, and to our modern Nonconformity. The present publication owes its origin to that decision.

But it is proper to state that the responsibility of the Committee appointed to carry that resolution into effect is restricted to their having entrusted this service to my hands. No one besides myself is in the slightest degree accountable for any statement or expression

that will be found in these pages. The volume, I believe, expresses opinions and feelings which are common among English Congregationalists, but no individual is bound by anything I have written.

Our spiritual forefathers may not have been perfect men, but my impression is, that, take them for all in all, neither the world nor the church has seen such men elsewhere in modern times. No small effort has been made of late to detract from their just claim on our gratitude and admiration. If I have written somewhat largely in their defence, the reason will be obvious.

It is with a full foresight of the hostile criticism to which the results of my labour may be exposed that I commit them to the press. But in the battle of opinion, the place of a book is generally determined according to its merit. The man who is not prepared calmly to abide that issue should not challenge it. It must suffice for me to say, that I have endeavoured to acquit myself honestly towards the dead, and usefully towards the living.

ROBERT VAUGHAN.

ST. JOHN'S TERRACE, REGENT'S PARK,

Oct. 4, 1862.

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BOOK I.

Religious Life in England before 1660.



CHAPTER I.

Religious Life in the Early Church.

THE religion of Christ is eminently a religion of conviction. It addressed itself at first, not to the men by whom multitudes are governed, but to the individuals of whom multitudes are composed. It isolated the conscience of each man, and said to the man thus placed apart, 'Receive our message, and thou shalt live; to reject it will be to perish.' It ever pointed toward things to be done from conviction; to nothing as to be done by proxy or by constraint. If it affected multitudes or communities, it was by reaching them through the consciences of persons, not through the laws of princes. Its starting point was from the base upwards, not from the summit downwards. Nations are great only as they are intelligent and virtuous. So churches were to be great only as they should be made to consist of instructed, convinced, and regenerated men.

BOOK I.
Christianity
and the
individual
conscience.

BOOK I.

The old
pagan faiths
came from
public
authority.

From this circumstance the religious life of the early church became a life of its own order. The nations had seen nothing like it before. All religions, indeed, were supposed to be grounded in faith, and the people were all supposed to act from conviction. But priests and magistrates had not been wont to wait, after the Christian manner, until faith should be voluntarily embraced, and conviction should come as the natural outgrowth of instruction. Over the great domain of heathendom, princes accounted it a most important part of their function to suppress all religions supposed to be false, and to uphold the religion supposed to be true. In the discharge of this supposed duty, their great instrument was the sword. Every religious act, accordingly, was an act of obedience, not only to a divinity, but to a priest and to a magistrate. The inward conviction might be present or absent, but the outward obedience was imperative.

Speciality of
the Hebrew
govern-
ment.

Hebrew kings, also, were to uphold the true religion, and to suppress the false. But their mission was special. We find no credentials like theirs either in the past or the present. When modern princes can trace their office to a special revelation, attested by miracles, men may safely bow to their authority after the old Hebrew manner. It is clear that the first preachers of the Gospel regarded their message as a message which they were bound to promulgate, without waiting for the authority of law from the prince, or for synodical action in their favour from the priest. ‘And they called them, and ‘commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the ‘name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said ‘unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God ‘to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

‘For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’*

CHAP. I.

So clear was it that the kingdom of Christ was not a kingdom of this world. It was a kingdom founded wholly on moral forces. It claimed no alliance with secular law. It simply prayed to be let alone. Its empire was in the mind. It meddled not with body or goods. It left care on such matters to Cæsar, to whom it rightly pertains.

Spirituality of the Christian dispensation.

But that one expression, “empire in the mind,” reveals the secret of much that was to follow. Religion was the great influence by which sovereigns brought mind, as well as body, into subjection to their sway.

Church and State.

The magistrate might destroy the body, but after that there was no more that he could do. But by means of religion and of the priest he might destroy both body and soul in hell. The sword gave him rule over the material and the present; but superstition was made to extend his dominion over the spiritual and the future. It was no small matter to be able to move this world by the terrors of the next. Hence the man who was the great ruler of the Roman Empire in that day was its great priest—its *Pontifex Maximus*. Hence, also, to affirm that the authority of Cæsar might be good in such matters as buying and selling, but that it could not be good as extended to religion, was construed as an attempt to deprive that potentate of half his empire, and of much the most important half. To make light of his laws in secular matters was declared to be sedition, or it may be treason. To make light of his laws in religious matters was declared to be both treason and impiety. It was natural that a proscribed religion

* Acts iv. 18-20.

BOOK I. should be denounced as the greatest of crimes, inasmuch as the authority to which it was opposed was assumed to be the most momentous and the most sacred.

Conflict
between the
secular and
the spirit-
ual.

Looking at these positions of Church and State, positions so clearly before us in the early Christian centuries, it is easy to see that from this source contentions of the gravest description would come. Conviction in Christian souls is sure to show itself more or less self-reliant and independent; and the love of power elsewhere is sure to be such as to spare no pains to discountenance such self-reliance, and to crush such independence. In looking at the ecclesiastical proceedings of 1662, in our history, in their relation to these causes, we shall meet with many sad illustrations of the antagonism which has never ceased to spring from this source.

The two
great forces
face to face.

Within the walls of ancient Rome, and in that part of the vast inclosure where the ruins of the ancient city stand apart, and crumble into deeper ruin in comparative solitude, there is one structure which rises higher than the rest, and is more gigantic than the rest. Several of the hills, so memorable from the incidents connected with them in Roman history, slope down towards the level on which that edifice rests. The form of the building is circular, the outward surface rising in one upward line from the base to the summit. There are many ways of entrance. Passing through one of those arched passages, you reach an even floor in the interior, forming a vast circle. Walls rise to the height of some twenty feet around the edge of that circle, and from that elevation benches range off, each higher, wider, and more distant than the former, until the vast basin marks its outline on the open sky, and presents

sitting room in the nearer, or standing room on the further circles, for some seventy or eighty thousand persons. There were occasions when around on those front seats might be seen the emperor and his family, the patrician nobles, constituting the senate of Rome, and the ambassadors of foreign countries. Beyond were men and women splendidly attired, in the next gradation of rank and opulence; and beyond those you might see a mass of heads from the busy life of Rome, terminating with the lowest class, who press upon each other on the standing room upon the highest and outer curve of the edifice. Such was the appearance of the interior of the Colosseum on a Roman holiday.

But for what were all these persons brought together—brought together day after day, and sometimes week after week? The answer to this question is not to the honour of Roman civilization. That multitude has come into that place in search of pleasure, and the pleasure they seek is to see the strongest and most ferocious animals let loose upon each other down upon that central floor, or to see men wrestle to death there with men, or with infuriated beasts. Between the successive exhibitions of this nature, the spectators eat and drink, and joke and laugh. Should the excitement flag, from the repetition of these scenes, you may hear the cry raised—"The Christians to the lions!" And if that cry becomes sufficiently general, officers are sent to the prisons, and a supply of Christians is furnished. The modern Christian can hardly stand for the first time on that floor, at the base of that huge structure, and look up at those now mouldering benches, and not picture to himself his brother Christian who was made to stand there, long centuries ago, that he might furnish

BOOK I.

amusement to that pitiless multitude by doing battle with the hungry lion before him. Was it a marvel that the ancestors of such a people should have been described as suckled by a wolf? Or that the mildest of the apostles should have spoken of that Roman "world" as "lying in wickedness?"

But if the Colosseum multitude was representative of the people and power of Rome, so that Christian man thrust before them was also a representative—a representative of Christianity and of Christ. He might be the image of weakness to the outward sense, but he was the reality of power from the spiritual influences which were embodied in him. The two great forces which were to try their strength against each other in the world of the future, were there face to face. We know that in this struggle, the force which was apparently so much the weakest, was to prove the strongest. The great religious and social system, shadowed forth in that Colosseum multitude, is to be unwoven and displaced, almost to its last shred, and the man on that blood-stained floor is the presence of the power by which that work is to be done. Even the Roman eagles are to submit to the might of the Cross.

Sources of
spiritual
power in
the early
Church.

But whence came this strength beneath so much apparent weakness? Partly from a Divine power which we can comprehend but imperfectly, and partly from moral causes which it is not difficult to understand. The old religions of the world had lost much of their influence, and man is not made to live without a religious faith of some kind. Christianity proclaimed itself as adapted to this sense of want—as the new, the higher, the nobler manifestation of which the world

was so much in need. There was much also in the credentials of the new faith to secure attention.

There was the evidence in its favour derived from *history*. The first preachers of the Gospel were careful to show that Christianity was no mere accident in the story of the world. It was, in their apprehension, the fulfilment of a purpose as old as the beginning. With the entrance of sin came the proclamation of redemption. Nay, more: what was done in the fulness of time was done in accordance with doctrines older than the foundation of the world. If they preached to Jews, a great part of their argument was that they taught no other things than Moses and the prophets did say should come. If they preached to Gentiles, they were careful to affirm that the God who had sent his Son into the world to teach and save it, was the God who had made all nations of one blood, who had never ceased to rule over them, and had filled their hearts from age to age with food and gladness. They felt the advantage of being able to look to Christianity as thus rooted in the past. An antique grandeur was thrown about it as it was thus made to hold its place as a part, and in reality as the most significant part, in the great scheme of the world's creation, government, and history. The Hebrew Scriptures, from which these conceptions were derived, had been watched over and preserved, as sacred writings, with a singular care. There were no writings of that age claiming such antiquity, and none so well attested. Not to believe in the history of the Hebrews was not to believe in remote history at all. If the past of the world, as reported in those writings, was not to be credited, then the world could scarcely be said to have a past that could be known to the present.

BOOK I.

Throughout those writings, coming from so many different men, and through so many centuries, there was one special note of *prophecy*, declaring that the time would come when a greater than the prophets—a greater even than Moses himself, would appear, to become a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. It is said of our Lord, that ‘beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.’* The apostles made appeals of this nature constantly, in the hearing both of Jews and Gentiles.

Next came the evidence from *miracles*. In the Old Testament the supernatural was seen to be interwoven with the natural, showing that the voice which spoke from those oracles was the voice of God. The miracles of the New Testament are distinguished, for the most part, by some strong characteristics, from those of the Old Testament. They are not like those recorded by Moses, Joshua, or Daniel—great physical miracles, wrought in the sight of whole communities and nations. They are nearly all miracles of healing and of mercy. They are signs, not more of power than of pity. They come upon us without noise and without observation, like the dew, and like it, they are everywhere beautiful and refreshing. The circumstances under which they present themselves are most natural. The effects described as resulting from them are no less natural. The world in that day was full of pretension to the supernatural. But of all impostors the pretenders to such power are the most easily detected. It is not given to them to know where to stop. We see this strikingly in the legends of the Romanists. Everything in the Christian

* Luke xxiv. 27.

miracles seemed to say that the Divine power had come to the earth, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. In this manner, history, prophecy, and miracle were made to dispose men to hearken to His voice who had often said in vain—"Hear, and your souls shall live." These were among the *materials of thought*, and the *means of conviction*, which prompted the early believers in Christ to avow themselves Christians.

But to discern clearly the modes of thinking, and the spiritual experiences, in the Christian mind of that age, we must look beyond the attestations of the Gospel to the Gospel itself. This was the grand source of the new life by which such minds were distinguished. Heathen men in that day, when assured that the Divine Being had spoken supernaturally to mankind, would expect to find many of the probable conclusions of reason confirmed by such utterances, and to find much revealed to them which they could not otherwise have known. All the doctrines of the Gospel are truths of this latter kind. They consist of disclosures concerning what God has resolved *to do* for men. They consist, accordingly, of *facts*, and of facts which become such by Divine action, and which must be placed before us by Divine communication, if we are to have any knowledge of them. We may reason ourselves into the belief that God is just, and good, and merciful; but the manifestation of those perfections through an Incarnation, an Atonement, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, is not an enunciation of principles discoverable by reason, but an announcement of *facts*, which can be known only as matters of history. Again, these facts implied others. The Incarnation implied some deep need in man, and it manifested

BOOK I.
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what God was prepared to do to become his helper. The Atonement implied human guilt, and disclosed the way of forgiveness. The gift of the Holy Spirit implied a bondage to sin, and showed how the bondsmen were to be made free. Gentiles had long confessed, in a thousand ways, their need of teaching and help, and here was a ministration meeting that need. Many, accordingly, on hearing the Gospel, cast themselves upon it. Believing themselves forgiven, they found peace of conscience. Confiding in this promised spiritual aid, their struggles against the base tendencies of their appetites and passions was no longer a struggle in vain. The Gospel seemed to be all this when first announced to them. Their growing trust in it made it to be all this increasingly in their own consciousness.

The assemblies of primitive believers.

Let the reader imagine himself in an assembly of primitive believers—say, in the great assembly at Antioch. The doors are open. Men of the city enter to look on, and pass away. Presently some of the strangers are heard to ask why it is that the persons present have thus manifestly forsaken the religion of their country? One of the pastors occupies the desk. He requests the brethren to be silent, and says—The question which the strangers have proposed is a very reasonable one, and one which he is prepared to answer in their behalf. He then sets forth this evidence from history, from prophecy, from miracle, from the nature of the Gospel, and from its effect upon the hearts and lives of Christians, and turning from the strangers to the Christians before him, he inquires—‘Is it, or is it not, for such reasons, that you have abandoned the religion of the past, and professed yourselves Christians?’ And you may easily

conceive of them as rising from their seats, while they answer, 'Yes, verily, it is for such reasons that we avow ourselves disciples of Christ, and hope to live and die so doing.'

Such, in substance, was the religious life of the early church. The fruit of the character thus realized was such as might be expected to spring from it. Part of this fruit is seen in their zeal to diffuse the faith which they had embraced. A strong tendency towards a multiplication of itself is one of the characteristic laws of all life. Every church was then a mission church. Almost every man and woman was a missionary. The merchant who became a Christian talked of Christianity as he travelled with his fellow merchants. The soldier, when he became converted, felt bound to speak concerning the Gospel to his fellow soldiers. On this theme the Christian master could speak to his slave, and even the slave sometimes ventured to name the name of Christ to his master. In this manner all were preachers. Hence the multitudes of Christians in Rome in the time of Nero. Hence the greater number still in Bithynia, some thirty years later, where, as Pliny assures us, nearly the whole country had relinquished their old faith.*

Manifestation of spiritual life in the early Church.

Another fruit of the earnest spiritual life in the early church is seen in the manner in which they subordinated everything institutional and ceremonial, to what was inward and spiritual. In a part of the world where everything religious had hitherto been so thickly overlaid with ritualism, as to seem to be concealed and smothered by it, a people make their appearance in whose estimation such merely bodily exercise is of no value. Even in this respect, nothing short of an in-

* Lardner's *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*.

BOOK I.

Simplicity
of usage in
the early
Church.

spiration from heaven could have created such a people in such circumstances.

Suppose yourself in communion with a church in that age. You wish to travel to some distant province. The officers furnish you with your letters of "commendation," which will suffice to ensure you a Christian welcome wherever Christians are found. Many were the great cities in those times. You enter one of these. On either hand are stately mansions, with terraced gardens and marble statuary, bespeaking the patrician wealth and taste of their owners. You pass through magnificent squares, where temples, theatres, and other public structures rise like miracles of art. But to discover the residence of the Christian pastor you must turn away from those opulent quarters towards the homes of a less wealthy class of citizens. At length you reach the dwelling you have sought. You obtain admission. The good man presents himself to you. He reads your letter. He is satisfied, and gives you his warm right hand of Christian greeting, and perhaps impresses the kiss of brotherhood upon your forehead. He inquires how it has fared with you by the way, and with the churches in the cities through which you have passed. He tells you somewhat of the recent experiences of the church of which he is a minister, of its joys and sorrows, of its successes and its injuries, and perhaps of the special happiness of the brethren on the last Lord's-day, when an epistle from Paul or Peter was read for the first time in their hearing. You go with him on the approaching first day of the week to the place of meeting. It is no magnificent structure reared to public worship. The Christians of those days dared not raise such edifices if they could. The great attraction of the spot probably

is its promise of comparative quiet and safety. What is a sacred day to them is a common day to the great heathen world about them. The pastors read portions of the Greek version of the Old Testament, and deliver the word of exposition and exhortation. Prayer is offered for all men. And if it may be safely done they sing hymns of praise to Christ, as their God and Redeemer. Before they separate they break the sacramental bread, and drink together of the sacramental cup. The busy or the gay multitude without rush on with their wonted noise and heedlessness. But it is the privilege of those devout hearts to hear a voice saying to them—‘Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’ With them, such is their simplicity and freedom of worship, the act of worship consecrates all times and all places. The few rites with which they were familiar may be observed anywhere, and their personal piety may be strong in the absence of all such outward things. Hierarchical pomp, and the arrogant sacerdotalism, so obtruded upon us and so mischievous in later times, were then unknown.

Associated with this religious zeal, and this strong spiritual element, were great courage and great power of endurance. Not to bow to the laws of the empire concerning religion was, as we have seen, to become liable to the charge of sedition and treason. But the Gospel made the refusal of obedience to those laws an imperative obligation. To obey Cæsar in such matters was to be unfaithful to Him who had spoken to them from God. Hence Christians were regarded as pronouncing themselves traitors by their very profession. When it was deemed expedient to persecute them, this was the ground taken against them.

BOOK I.
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We do not, of course, mean to say that all persons who assumed the Christian name in those times were eminently pious, or even pious at all; nor do we say that all believers in the early church were endowed with the spirit of martyrdom. We speak of what was common, not of what was invariable. The spirit of self-sacrifice evinced by Christians in their lives, and often in their deaths—sometimes by the sword, sometimes by fire, sometimes by the lions, and not unfrequently in the dungeon and the mines—was a potent influence in attracting others to the cross. It will be seen, then, that the faith of believers in the early ages of the church was a faith rooted in conviction, and nurtured by intelligence; and that it created deep spiritual feeling, such as made men zealous for the propagation of their creed, little concerned about the symbols of religion when compared with the reality; and brave, even to martyrdom, when the hour of trial came upon them. It is something to know that the earlier disciples of Christ were men and women of this type. The evidence which made them all this must have been great. The teaching which trained them to all this must have been teaching which had produced deep personal conviction. The power which sustained them through all this must have been Divine. For it must be remembered that the promise of the Gospel was not the promise of a sensuous or a communistic paradise. To the believer in that day, the present was dark—a region subject to the powers of darkness. The brightness on his path came from a distance—from above.

Early British Christianity.

To the spontaneous impulse of minds brought under such influences we must attribute the introduction of Christianity into Britain. The notion that St. Paul

preached to our rude ancestors is a fond imagination, and nothing more. The legend concerning King Lucius and the Popes Evaristus and Eleutherius, is a manifest invention from a later time.* During some three centuries, the Roman army in Britain was rarely less than 50,000 men.† The civil government must have been proportionably great, and the settlers in the island under the Roman protection must have been greatly more numerous. These strangers came from nearly every part of the empire, and many of them beyond a doubt brought Christianity along with them. In the early part of the fourth century, the council of Arles, assembled by the Emperor Constantine, consisted of thirty-three bishops, summoned from Africa and from parts of the Western Empire, and three of that number were from Britain.‡ In the following century, when the Britons withdrew to the fastnesses of Wales, they did so, not as pagans, but as Christians. At the close of the sixth century, Augustine and his monks found them in possession of a Christian hierarchy, a Christian literature, and a Christian civilization sufficiently strong to eradicate any remains of their old faith or usage that might have been left among them. All these acquisitions they must have made while under the Romans. There was no channel through which they could have received them afterwards.

The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons is commonly attributed to the missionaries sent by Pope Gregory. It is a fact, however, and a fact not sufficiently remembered by Englishmen, that the conversion of our Saxon

Early religious life among the Anglo-Saxons.

* *Archeologia*. xxxiii. 208 et seq.

† Horsley's *Britannia Romana*. Book i. c. 6. Book ii. c. 1.

‡ Labbe, *Concil.* Ed. Harduin. i. 259-270.

BOOK I. ancestors to Christianity is not so much due to Roman missionaries as to missionaries from another quarter. We learn from authentic history, that St. Columba, and a humble brotherhood consisting of twelve disciples, settled in Iona, on the coast of Argyleshire, in 654. The history of this fraternity is the history of men honestly separated to the pursuit and communication of religious knowledge. They dwelt in structures formed of rough hewn wood, and covered with reeds. Every thing pertaining to their condition was in keeping with such appearances. Nevertheless, they sent off pious men to settle in different parts of Scotland and Ireland, and every such settlement was a centre from which missionaries went abroad to strengthen the faith of Christians, and to attempt the conversion of the heathen still left in the land. They possessed many books, laboured hard to multiply them by transcription, and great was the value they set on them. What learning the age possessed was in their keeping, and the authority which they assigned to the Scriptures, and the devout spirit in which they studied them, were most exemplary. The northern half of Anglo-Saxon Britain was brought to the profession of Christianity by the direct or indirect influence of the disciples of St. Columba. Through Bernicia and Deira, the successful labours of the Scottish missionaries were extended to East Anglia, to Mercia, and even to Wessex. Anglo-Saxon Britain would have become Christian through their means had the service been left wholly in their hands.*

Purpose of
this chapter.

But it must suffice to say, that so far Britain had

* Bede's *Eccles. Hist.* Book iii. c. 1-4. Cumin, *Vita Columb.* Adaman. *Vita Columb.* Pinkerton's *Vitæ Antiquæ Sanctorum.* Chron. Sax. A.D. 565. Malms. *De Reg.* Book iii. c. 3.

become Christian, first under the Romans, and then under the Saxons, by means of that free and spontaneous action which we see to have been so characteristic of Christianity in its earlier and purer times. This glance at religious life in those days must not be thought irrelevant to our present purpose, inasmuch as the whole subsequent history of Christianity consists of two great phases, bearing an intimate relation to what Christianity then was. The first of these consists in a gradual *departure* from that more scriptural standard of faith and feeling, as seen in the subsequent history of Romanism ; and the second consists in an effort to *return* to that standard, as seen more or less in the history of Protestantism, and eminently in the history of English Nonconformity. To use the words of one of the greatest of men, ‘ Truth
‘ indeed came once into the world with her Divine Master,
‘ and was in perfect shape most glorious to look on : but
‘ when he ascended, and his apostles after him were laid
‘ asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers,
‘ who—as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon with
‘ his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris—
‘ took the Virgin, Truth, hewed her lovely form into a
‘ thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds.
‘ From that time, ever since, the sad friends of Truth,
‘ such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that
‘ Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and
‘ down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find
‘ them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and
‘ Commons, nor ever shall do, till her Master’s second
‘ coming : he shall bring together every joint and member,
‘ and shall mould them into one immortal feature of love-
‘ liness and perfection.’*

* *Milton’s Works*, Mitford’s edition, vol. ii. *Areopagitica*, 435.



CHAPTER II.

Religious Life in the Middle Age.

THE ministry of the Christian Church is unique. It is a teaching and educating ministry. All religions have had their priesthoods, but none of them can be said to have been teaching priesthoods. Certainly none of them have been such at all after the Christian manner. The priesthoods of Egypt and of the Asiatic empires, though the depositories of the learning and science of their time, hoarded those treasures as the wealth distinctive of their caste. They believed in the maxim that knowledge is power, and they monopolized the knowledge that they might monopolize the power. Their knowledge was made to manifest itself in architecture, and decoration, and ceremonial pomp. But in all that, the intention was not so much to teach the ignorant, as to awe them into subjection. The mass of the people were slaves, and their religion, in common with their diet and their outward garb, was adapted to their condition. Even the people who were free, but who were occupied in the labour and common traffic of the world, were left to

BOOK I.

The institute of the Christian ministry is unique.

BOOK I.

Priests and
philoso-
phers in
Heathen-
dom.

the low routine habit of thought in regard to religion which was supposed to be natural to them.

If we pass from East to West, the aspect of matters in this respect, though considerably different, can hardly be deemed an improvement. Among the Greeks and Romans priests were always an insignificant order of men. Not a name from that class comes into any prominence in their history. The Italians, like the Athenians, were prone enough to superstition. But this feeling never led them to vest any great power in a priesthood. If their priests were teachers at all, it was as holding out the terrors of their religious system in favour of some of the political or common duties of life. To uphold temples, to conduct ceremonies and processions, and to regulate holidays, seem to have been their great business. The philosophers, indeed, who taught everything, taught something about religion. But their teachings on this subject, as on the rest, were restricted to the upper and well-to-do classes. To become teachers of the crowds to be seen in the theatres and market-places was not their mission. Most of those men, we have reason to suppose, had little faith in the popular mythology. But they left the people to their belief in it, evidently concluding that to attempt to raise them to a higher theism would be worse than useless. So in the old world, man as man was left almost untouched by instruction concerning religion, either from priests or from philosophers. The wisest seemed to have despaired of raising the common mind about them into sympathy with any of the higher forms of truth, purity, and nobleness.

Religious
teaching
among the

Of course in the Hebrew nation we see some exception to this course of things. But even there the teaching

power in action was of a much more limited description than is commonly imagined. It is observable that in a system characterized by the minuteness of its directions concerning everything to be done in connection with religion, we find no rules laid down to settle when, or where, or how the priest should acquit himself as a teacher of the people. The reason of this omission is not difficult to discover. Men who came to the office of priesthood among the Hebrews came to it as a kind of birthright. Being of a particular family, unless some very special reason interposed, a man passed to the function of a priest, as a matter of course. But from this circumstance it would follow that the number of priests gifted with an 'aptness to teach' would be few. Hence, to lay down rules concerning the duties of priests as teachers would be useless, or something worse. There were, we can suppose, priests who did teach. But all service of that nature seems to have been left to be prompted by individual feeling, and by a consciousness of fitness for it.

CHAP. II.

Hebrews—
the priest.

In the office of the prophet we find the teacher. But even here the function of the teacher was occasional, rather than permanent. The prophet was moved to deliver his message, and having done that, his work for the time was done. The prophets were not men taking their position as teachers in given places at given times. With them, as well as with the priests, the degree in which they should become instructors of the people, was left to be determined by the impulses of their own mind. Through the long interval which preceded the Babylonish captivity, the work of religious instruction seems to have devolved mainly on the Hebrew

The pro-
phet.

BOOK I.
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 The syna-
 gogue.

parent.* One of the happy effects of the chastening influence which came with the captivity appears to have been, that it awakened in the mind of the people a feeling of want in regard to something more settled and recurrent in the form of religious service than they had hitherto possessed. From this time the synagogue becomes a conspicuous institution in their history. We do not learn that the synagogue owed its origin to any command from the magistrate, or to any exhortation from the priest. Oriental history had never seen any institution of this nature. Where everything else was governmental, we here find a very remarkable growth which is, in the strictest sense, spontaneous, voluntary, and independent. The people give it existence, and they retain possession of it—a self-governing and an independent possession of it. The elders and rulers in the synagogue were laymen, and their teaching was, no doubt, for the most part, very elementary. But it was teaching widely diffused, and it recurred with the constancy of the Sabbath-day. It is the nearest approach, in the times preceding the Advent, to the institution originated by our Lord, when he said—“Go, *preach* the Gospel to every creature—go, *teach* all nations.” The apostles so entered into the spirit of these injunctions, that everything seemed to drop into insignificance in their history in comparison with teaching. Nor was it enough that they should teach; they were to deposit their lessons with faithful men, who should be able to teach others.† So the great mission of the Christian ministry is, to set the world right in its religious thought, its religious ways, and its religious life.

The power among men which the Christian ministry

* Deut. vi.

† 2 Tim. ii. 2.

was thus destined to become, it became, and has continued to be. The early fathers vanquished the religion and philosophy of the old world. In the middle age, the great depositories of knowledge were the Christian clergy. During the Reformation era, princes were strong, but preachers were stronger. Since the middle of the seventeenth century diplomatists have not had so much to do with religion; and in the public affairs of Europe the statesman has taken a precedence of the divine which he is not likely to lose. But the Christian minister is still potent. He is so, in some connections, as allied with the State; in others simply from acting as an educating influence on the mind of the people. In this last sphere the office retains the power proper to it.

With the fall of the Roman empire came the ascendancy of men bearing the office of the Christian ministry. From amidst the ruin brought upon the old civilization those men build up a hierarchy, a scheme of doctrine, and a form of power, which is to retain its place unshaken by the changes of a thousand years. It was a new thing in European history to see the ministers of religion potent for anything. It was eminently a novelty to see them thus potent. Dynasties come, and pass away; states are divided or consolidated; whole peoples are vanquished or displaced; but amidst all these revolutions this creation of ecclesiastical intelligence continues stable, expands, grows, and seems to make all change tributary to its own identity and authority. The mind visible in this achievement may be, in our estimation, to a large extent misguided. But who will question its genius for organization, its sagacity in adapting means to ends, its concentration, its power? It was not thus, indeed, that He who ordained his ministers to become

CHAP. II.

Historical
position
of the
Christian
ministry.

Impress of
its intelli-
gence on
the middle
age.

BOOK I.

the teachers of the nations intended they should execute their mission. But it was in consequence of their being made a teaching ministry that these men became thus strong, whether for evil or for good. It is true, in the polity of the Church there was little originality. It was conformed in its great outline to the secular polity of the Roman Empire. Many of its doctrines, too, may be traced to the superstitions prevalent among the people whom the clergy aspired to govern. But in dealing with these matters there was room enough left for the action of that profound policy, and especially for the display of that combination of tenacity and flexibility, which was to be so conspicuous through the whole history of the Papal church.

Restoration
of State
religion and
its effect.

One effect from this progress of clerical ascendancy is seen in the formation of that sort of union between the power of the priesthood and the civil power which had existed everywhere before the promulgation of Christianity, but which had been wholly unknown to the Church during the first three centuries of her history. It is not until Christianity has vanquished the forces of the Roman empire, that her ministers begin to account the secular appliances of that empire as their great strength. The Church is to be potent in the future by becoming a servant to the power it has subdued! The terms of this compact between the spiritual and the secular varied in different countries and at different times; and the contentions between the parties on this ground were often bitter. But the clergy never failed to secure one great advantage from this policy. The State, while taking precedence of the Church, became so far her servant as to be ever ready to punish alleged ecclesiastical offences with

civil penalties. Apart from such assistance the clerical thunder would have spent itself to little purpose. All the horrors in the history of religious persecution which have done so much to make the history of religion itself appear at times more like a piece of history from the infernal regions than like anything human, must be traced to this renewed confederacy between the priest and the magistrate. *Without that*, not a fact in the long story of those evil deeds would have cast its disgrace upon our faith. Our fathers suffered less from this cause than some other nations. But when the labours of Wycliffe gave movement to public thought, the heresies of the Lollards were met by the statute which doomed all heretics to the stake.

The clergy of every national church in the middle age were in the condition of men who had to serve two masters. They owed allegiance to the king, and they were often reminded that they were under the same obligation to the papacy. To-day we find them in high debate on some question at issue between them and the crown; to-morrow their controversy has respect to some pretension of the papal court which is said to be undue and uncanonical. The pontiffs, moreover, are intent upon enriching their dependents by bestowing on them vacant bishoprics or livings, now in one nation, now in another. But the sovereigns of those nations are commonly not less intent on protecting their domains from spoliation in that form. The wrangling about this distribution of pelf and power runs through the whole history of the hierarchy during those centuries. Through long intervals, this is the material which comes to the surface, to the exclusion of almost everything beside.

Disputes
concerning
patronage
and power.

BOOK I.

Growth of
sacerdotal
theories.

But amidst all these contentions the clergy are careful that the foundations of their spiritual power shall be laid broad and deep. In process of time, the sacramental scheme was made to be so definite and comprehensive, as to place the soul of the worshipper completely in the hands of the priest. The seven sacraments, beginning with baptism, and ending with extreme unction, left every spiritual privilege, from the beginning of life to its close, at the disposal of that functionary. Through his services, and through those services alone, could spiritual safety be realized. In the case of persons who gave credence to this theory, the sense of subjection must have been absolute.

Track of
light
through
the dark-
ness.

But it should be confessed, that with all their proneness towards error in so many directions, the clergy who flourished towards the decline of the Roman empire, and those even of the middle age, never wholly lost sight of the great lines of revealed truth in relation either to man or to his Maker. The influence of such writers as Augustine, Ambrose, and Bernard, was great, and it was an influence, in the main, on the side of just views concerning man, as guilty and as incapable of removing his guilt; as depraved and as incapable of vanquishing his depravity. Nor was it less just in relation to God, as taking away human guilt by the sacrifice of Christ, and as subduing human depravity by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Light to this effect shines out more or less from age to age amidst the darkness, so that the Reformers of the sixteenth century often insisted, in their confessions and in their discussions, that the theology which they were concerned to inculcate was the theology which the most famous among the Christian Fathers had never failed to teach. It

would be easy, they were wont to say, to 'underprop' all their utterances with authorities from that source. From the tendency so generally manifest to substitute the worship of the Virgin, and of Saints, in the place of the worship of God, and even of Christ, we might be led to suppose that anything deserving the name of Christian devotion must have almost ceased to exist. But the writings of such men as are above mentioned, and the fact that those writings were considerably read, seem to warrant a more favourable conclusion.

The origin of the religious orders, whatever their subsequent declensions may have been, is everywhere a sign, more or less, of a religious feeling. Those orders may be regarded in the early stages of their history as embodying the Puritan element of the middle age. The object avowed by all of them, in their beginning, was a stricter and purer religious life than was recognised in the Church system of those days. In the language of the times, the parochial clergy were the *secular* clergy. They stood in a special relation to the secular power, and owed their wealth and influence largely to secular law. They were an order, but they were not included in what were called the *religious* orders. Monasteries were voluntary establishments, resting on voluntary contributions and endowments; and monks, according to the monastic theory, were men separated to the purest forms of spiritual service. And many of them, like the venerable Bede, were faithful to the institute to which they had bound themselves by the most sacred vows, praying much for the living and the dead, labouring much as the teachers of youth, as transcribers of books, and even as preachers of the word.

CHAP. II.

Spiritual
life in the
religious
orders.

BOOK I.
Mediæval
voluntary-
ism.

But in the scheme of the Mendicant Orders—the Preaching Friars, as they are sometimes called—who make their appearance early in the thirteenth century, we find a still stronger impeachment of the existing hierarchy. In the estimation of those orders, monasticism had become a failure, because, while it professed to be a voluntary system, it accepted endowments, the consequence of which was, that beginning in poverty, it had ended in riches, which, according to the Mendicants, was necessarily to begin in purity and to end in corruption. The friars, accordingly, carried their voluntarism so far that they altogether eschewed endowments. They would depend on the voluntary offerings of the people, and on those offerings as coming to them from day to day, and as to be expended from day to day. Among these orders, the Franciscans, in their earlier times, were the great preachers—the great city missionaries. Their object was not to supersede the hierarchy, nor even to reform it, but to supplement it with new agencies. Everything about the Franciscan—his dress, his diet, his home, all were to bespeak him a poor man, and to proclaim him as the poor man's minister. To know where plague or leprosy raged was to know where to find the Franciscans, who, from their skill in medicine, were ministers alike to the body and the soul.

In their preaching, the friars discarded the learned and logical style then so common. In their view, the clergy had become disqualified for their work by their learning, hardly less than by their wealth. They were themselves not only poor men preaching to the poor, but laymen preaching to the laity. Their language was studiously simple. Their illustrations were studiously popular. They found material for discourse in the well-known

legend, in dramatic dialogue, in every-day life, and in their own thought and experience. Meditation and feeling, more than books, made them what they were as preachers. Men and women to whom sermons had long been most unintelligible and dull, now hung upon the lips of the preacher, and would travel far to enjoy that privilege. Great was the success of the new institute. In little more than thirty years the Minorite preachers in England exceeded 1,200 in number, and they had fixed centres of operation for their missionary work in nearly fifty English towns. We have hardly an ancient town where the name of the friars does not survive as designating some spot where they had found their home. As we read the accounts of their progress, of the effects produced by their preaching, and of the number of conversions which took place, we may almost imagine that we are perusing some journal of our early Methodism. Religious and humane persons supplied them with funds. Their good works made them many friends. But the monk had rarely a good word for them, and the parochial clergy shared in the same feeling of jealousy.*

Nor did this voluntary controversy die out when the friars had long ceased to be the men they had once been. In 1425, one William Russell, at the head of a Franciscan convent in London, denied the divine right of tithes, and insisted that they ought not to be paid to the parochial clergy. They might rest on human law, or on long custom, but, according to the Scriptures, the contributions of the laity should be applied to pious or charitable uses, according to the will of the donors.

The voluntary controversy in the fifteenth century.

* *Monumenta Franciscana*. Sir James Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography*. Butler's *Lives*—St. Francis.

BOOK I.

Great excitement was produced by this teaching. Forty years later, a Carmelite friar, named Parker, preached in St. Paul's, that the only revenue of the clergy should consist in the voluntary offerings of the faithful, that Christ and his apostles sought no other. On the following Sunday, a doctor of reputation assailed these positions in a discourse from the same pulpit. Subsequently, another Carmelite, the master of a convent, undertook the defence of the impugned doctrine, insisting that his brother Carmelite who had preceded him had simply delivered the doctrine of Scripture. The preacher concluded by announcing that the subject would be further discussed in his school on the following Friday. The discussion of Friday was resumed on the next Sunday. Those who had learnt doctrine of this nature from Wycliffe or from his disciples, looked on, as we may suppose, with no little interest. Many among the people professed themselves believers in the Carmelite tenets. An eloquent preacher was engaged to show that if our Lord accepted the willing offerings of the people, he did not *solicit* them in the manner of the Mendicants. This reasoning produced some impression. But an able Dominican now entered the lists, and having delivered himself with much effect in the cathedral, he urged the people to go to the Carmelite chapel in the afternoon, where a venerable doctor would discourse of them on the question. Notices were posted on the church doors. Crowds made their way to the chapel. John Mylverton, provincial of the order of the Carmelites, ascended the pulpit. He said he had heard that one of his brethren had been much defamed, charged with error and blasphemy. But he stood there prepared to show that the doctrine so described was the doctrine of Scrip-

ture, and of the Fathers. His manner was grave, and most earnest. The auditory, especially the common people, were greatly moved.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, who made report of these proceedings to the Pope, soliciting his advice and help, says, 'We know that some thought, and others were heard to say, if Christ were so poor, why should his followers, the Pope, the cardinals, the archbishops, bishops, and abbots, hold such large possessions? It is clear that priests should live on offerings freely made to them; that the Church became apostate from the day on which she was endowed; and that good service would be done to religion and to the nation if Churchmen were stripped of their wealth, and left in this matter to follow their Lord and his apostles.' So strong, and so general was this feeling, that it was with difficulty, we are told, that the people were restrained from breaking out into open insurrection. As will be expected, the primate did not solicit the assistance of the pontiff in vain. Mylverton was summoned to Rome, and passed two years in one of the dungeons of St. Angelo. But so did opinion in the direction of ecclesiastical change seethe in the English mind, even within the existing system, during more than two centuries before Henry VIII. put his hand to the work of reformation.*

Every friar who broached the above doctrine was immediately charged with reiterating one of the cardinal errors of that great antagonist of his order—John Wycliffe. But such was the hold which speculations of this nature had taken on the mind of many, that even this reproach could not deter such men from proclaim-

* Wilkins's *Concil.* iii. 433-439. Cotton MS. Titus, D. 10. p. 183. Turner's *Hist. Eng.*

BOOK I. ing their convictions. As we find English monasteries with scarcely a trace of anything distinctively Christian in their maxims or temper, while others, of the same age, are of a widely different description; so among the different orders of friars, while many fall sadly below the rules of their founders, others continue faithful to their vows, and resolve to give utterance to the truth that is in them, whatever the penalty of so doing may be.

Wycliffe
and the
Lollards.

Concerning the labours of Wycliffe and the history of the Lollards, we need not say anything. Those events are great facts on the surface of the past. Lollardism was checked, partially suppressed, but it did not die. During the Wars of the Roses the reform party among the people was known to be so formidable, that politicians reckoned upon it in their attempts to balance parties against each other. It is manifest, from the language of the ruling churchmen at that time, that they regarded the townspeople, and the commonalty at large, as inclined to the new learning, and as ready to favour it in secret, if not prepared to avow their attachment to it openly. So many works were written setting forth the views of the reformers in the language of the people, that it became one of the pressing questions put to suspected and accused persons—‘Have you in your possession any books written in English? Have you read such books? Have you any knowledge of such books—or of persons having any acquaintance with them?’

We select an instance. One of the works thus prohibited bore the name of the *Lantern of Light*. It described the Pope as Antichrist. Papal decrees it declared to be of no sort of authority. Indulgences

were a delusion. Pilgrimages were a demoralizing superstition. Spiritual obedience to clergymen who failed in their spiritual duties was a sin. The attempts made by the bishops to restrict the office of preaching to their own licensed priests marked them as the tools of Antichrist. It was the duty of the clergy to live in modest houses, and after a modest fashion, and to leave the decorating of their holy things with silver and gold, and their endless chantings, for the study of the Scriptures, and the preaching of the Gospel. 'The reason,' says the book, 'why men who entertained such views are so bitterly persecuted, is simply that the secular clergy may retain their possessions, and that the friars may have the mind of the people wholly at their disposal.' This book was found in the possession of a fellmonger named Claydon, living in St. Martin's-lane, near Aldersgate. Claydon had already suffered six years' imprisonment on account of his opinions, two in Conway Castle, and four in the Fleet. His servants were summoned to give evidence against him. One of these deposed that the *Lantern of Light* was often read on festival days in the family; the other said that he was present when the author of the book, a man named John Greene, brought it to his master, and he heard them converse about it. Claydon, in full memory of what he had suffered at Conway and in the Fleet, when questioned concerning this treatise, answered that it contained things which he believed to be good for his soul. He perished at the stake in Smithfield. Claydon was one of a class.*

The third volume of Wilkins's Councils furnishes many instances of persons among the endowed clergy embracing the doctrine of the Mendicants concerning the

Free opinions among the clergy.

* Wilkins's *Concil.* iii. 372-374, 396-399.

BOOK I. revenues of their order, and as holding and inculcating opinions widely at variance with the common faith and usage of their church. They said much to discourage the adoration of the cross, the worship of images, and prayers to saints. These usages they described as savouring of idolatry. They denied that the bread in the Eucharist ever ceased to be bread. While not unwilling to relinquish their church endowments, they condemned the begging customs of the friars. In the spirit of Wycliffe, they denounced the religious orders as of purely human origin, as a reflection on the institutions of Christ as if wanting in adaptation to the needs of the Church. They spoke of the Bible as the only pure and infallible authority in regard to religion, and urged the people to trust in the promise of God, as there made to them, to the exclusion of all other dependence. Pilgrimages tended to dissoluteness more than to religion. The only true pilgrimage was to do the commandments of God. The most conspicuous amongst the clergy who suffered during this interval, as holding opinions more or less of this complexion, was the devout and conscientious Reginald Peacocke, successively Bishop of St. Asaph and of Chichester. Among his patrons were men in the first rank. But after much effort, his enemies prevailed against him, and the influence of his friends could do no more than soften the execution of the sentence which sent him from his episcopal residence to a prison.*

Summary.

It will be seen, then, that religious life in the middle age was exceptional, so much so, that it is sometimes difficult to know where to find it. Everywhere it comes, not so

* Lewis's *Life of Peacocke*. Collier's *Eccles. Hist.* i. 674-676. Wilkins's *Concil.*

much from the action of authority, as from spontaneous influences—from light struggling through the darkness, from free impulses casting off the abounding restraints. Error is mixed with its truth, the not good is mixed with its good, but the true and the good are there. To the men who must think, and must be honest—honest in the sense of being faithful to their inward light—those long dark days were full of evil. Sovereigns and priests divided the dominion of body and soul between them, and in either department of rule were ready to visit divergence from the prescribed course of action or thought with the provided penalty. But the power of endurance was to be on the side of right, and the time in which the right should successfully claim its own was to come. We are now to follow the track of the great struggle in our history which has so far displaced these mediæval forms of intolerance and superstition, and has so far brought back to the Church of God among us its primitive light, and liberty, and life.



CHAPTER III.

Religious Life under the Tudors.

THE Reformation, which severed our clergy from all dependence on the papacy, placed them in a new subjection to the State. Much of the authority which had been ceded to the pontiffs now passed into the hands of our kings. The ecclesiasticism of the Vatican was succeeded by the Erastianism of St. Stephen's. Our sovereigns no longer exercised a divided power in relation to the Church. Its headship was wholly vested in themselves. Not only the temporalities, but the spiritualities of the ecclesiastical establishment, came under their absolute control. There could be no ecclesiastical law without their sanction. In past time, they had connected civil penalties with what the clergy accounted religious error. They now take upon them to distinguish for themselves between truth and error, and to determine everything concerning law and penalty in regard to religion. They might consult the clergy, but they knew nothing of them in any higher capacity than as advisers. It was a new thing to be freed from the old aggressive power of

CHAP. III.
New re-
lations of
the State to
the Church
from the
time of the
Refor-
mation.

BOOK I. the court of Rome, but it was a new thing also to be subject to this augmented power on the part of the crown. Protestantism did well in asserting its independence of the papacy. It would have done better if it had abstained from raising the chief magistrate into the place of the supreme bishop. The mind of our country experienced a change of masters, and the change was for the better, but it was far from being for the best. The distinction between the tolerated and the not-tolerated continued, and to those who were hanged, burnt, or beheaded for their religious opinions, it was no great solace to be told that they suffered according to the law of the State, and not according to the law of the pope.

Sum of the
Refor-
mation by
Henry
VIII.

The parliament by whose means Henry VIII. accomplished his reformation, was assembled in 1529, and it was not dissolved till 1536. History has shown how the spiritual courts were then reformed; how the jurisdiction of the prelates was restrained and narrowed; how the legislative authority of the houses of convocation was brought to an end; how the clergy were made subject to the court of the magistrate, in common with the laity; how the magistrate was made to act as a check on all spiritual persons in their dealing with charges of heresy; how the act against appeals to Rome, under any plea whatsoever, was followed by acts forbidding money contributions, in any form, to the papal treasury; and how, being thus shut out from all authority on English ground, the Bishop of Rome was at length declared to be no more than an ordinary bishop, and all persons were required to submit to the crown of England, as supreme over all persons and causes, civil or ecclesiastical, on pain of incurring the penalties of treason. The

weight of ecclesiastical oppression thus removed was great, and the people no doubt began to breathe anew, though many of the more thoughtful felt that it became them to rejoice with trembling. For this famous parliament, after all that it had done, remained in its own estimation Catholic. The king, too, boasted of being still a Catholic; and the nation was to remain Catholic, in regard at least to religious doctrine, even when thus wholly separated from the great centre of the Catholic system. In 1529, the year in which this parliament was convened, Henry issued a proclamation, in which eighty-five works, the productions of English or Continental reformers, from Wycliffe downwards, were condemned under their respective titles. In the following year, a Protestant named Bayfield was burnt in Smithfield, because he had been bravely zealous in importing and distributing such books.*

But the fact that there were so many publications of a reforming tendency to suppress, and that it was deemed expedient to adopt such measures to suppress them, suggest that the religious thought of the nation must have been greatly moved. The degree in which the king had himself favoured the new learning, especially by the encouragement given to the labours of Erasmus; the translation of the Scriptures into English, and the placing of copies of the entire Bible in all churches, to be read by all people; the free use of many admirable prayers in the mother tongue; the distribution of a vast number of books, licensed and unlicensed, full of Protestant ideas—ideas which could not fail to awaken

But a Protestant party grows up among the people.

* *Petition of the Commons*, MS. Rolls Office. *Parliamentary Hist.* i. 501, *et seq.* Herbert's *Henry VIII. Revolutions in English History*, ii. 150-174.

BOOK I. impulses which would find their vent in much utterance and action—all had so influenced the nation, as to have made it certain that the half-way reformation of the king could never satisfy it.

Edw. VI.
 On the accession of Edward VI. came one of those transitions from a time of persecution to comparative rest, which remind us of similar fluctuations in the experience of the early Church. The reign of the Six Articles, which disgraced the later years of Henry VIII., sent Protestants to the stake as heretics one day, and Romish priests to the gallows as traitors the next. But under the alternations of stimulus and restraint on the part of the Government, pious youth grew up with a martyr temper in them at Oxford. The devout Bilney, fragile in body, timid in soul, but possessed with a conscientiousness which made the fragile strong, and the timid brave, became a spiritual power in Cambridge. In Latimer, one of his many converts, we see the great preacher of the age—a man who gains the attention of all ears by his racy Saxon speech; charms all imaginations by his homebred and pictorial illustrations; and reaches nearly all consciences by his honest presentation of the realities of things, and his bold exposure of all shams. During many years Bilney and Latimer were Protestants without knowing it; and through the influence of such men a large portion of the nation became possessed with religious feeling, the ultimate tendencies of which few could see, and fewer still dared to avow. Tyndale had said, that he would cause the English mechanic to be better skilled in the knowledge of the New Testament than the modern priest; and by giving that book in English to his countrymen he fulfilled his pledge. In that act he saw the fruit of his life of

poverty and homelessness, of toil and danger ; and that work done, he surrendered himself to his martyr death. So under Henry the seed of the kingdom was to be widely sown, either secretly or openly, and the harvest time was to follow.

Established Protestantism, as denoting a scheme of doctrine as well as a scheme of polity, dates from the accession of Edward VI. Cranmer, sustained by the protector, and by the Protestant party in the council, arranged that an ecclesiastical visitation should take place through the whole kingdom. The visitors for each circuit consisted of two gentlemen, together with a civilian, a divine, and a registrar. The articles of instruction given them required that the wholesome proclamations of the late king against the pretensions of the Bishop of Rome, and in discouragement of superstition, should be republished ; that all images to which pilgrimages were made, or offerings presented, should be removed ; that the epistles and gospels read at high mass should be in English ; that the litany used in processions should also be in English, as commanded by his Majesty's royal father ; that on every Sunday and holiday a chapter should be read in English out of the New Testament at matins, and out of the Old Testament at evening song ; that holidays, which were designed to promote devotion, but had become the occasion of all kinds of dissoluteness, should be made seasons for reading the Scriptures, for attending prayer and the communion, and for offices of charity ; that the people should be taught to respect all ceremonies not abrogated by authority, and to reverence priests for their works' sake ; and that prayer should still be offered for departed souls. But the great innovation in this stage

The Re-
formation
under Ed-
ward VI.

BOOK I. of proceedings consisted in the publication of Cranmer's *Book of Homilies*, and in the place assigned in the means of popular instruction to the paraphrase on the New Testament by Erasmus. The *Homilies* were to be read by all preachers. An English translation of the work by Erasmus was to be placed in all churches, that it might be read by all persons disposed to read it. These publications were charged with the seeds of Protestant theology greatly beyond anything found in the standards of doctrine hitherto sanctioned by the English government. Parliament, when assembled, confirmed all that had been done. It provided further, that the cup should be restored to the laity in the communion, and that an end should be put to private masses.*

The first
Book of
Common
Prayer.

The great event, however, in ecclesiastical affairs at this juncture was still to come. This consisted in the instructions given to a commission of learned men to revise the forms of public worship generally. To these commissioners we owe the first Book of Common Prayer designed to be in harmony with the tenets of Protestantism and published in English. Parliament and the two houses of convocation gave their sanction to the new Liturgy. An act was also passed which allowed the clergy to marry. But the bill on that point did not become law without considerable opposition.†

The doc-
trine of the
Eucharist.

One of the great difficulties in respect to the Book of Common Prayer, related to what should be its teaching concerning the Eucharist. Peter Martyr in Oxford, and Bucer in Cambridge, were parties to public discussions

* Burnet's *Hist. Ref.* iii. 16, *et seq.* Strype's *Eccles. Mem.* ii., and *Life of Cranmer.* Statutes I Ed. VI. cc. 1, 2, 12.

† Burnet, iii. 131. Statutes I Ed. VI. 1, 2, 12.

on that subject. The doctrine of the Church of England, as then settled, and as it is at present, is in some degree peculiar. Three conceptions in regard to the Lord's Supper were at that time prevalent. Opposed to the Transubstantiation doctrine was Luther's Consubstantiation, and the more intelligible doctrine of Zwinglius, which accounted the bread and wine as the signs of a spiritual presence, and nothing more. The doctrine of Peter Martyr is not distinguishable from that of Zwinglius. Bucer discoursed somewhat more mystically on the subject, leaving by the obscurity—and apparently the designed obscurity—of his language, room for some notion as to a kind of presence called a real presence, though in what that reality consists his words do not at all enable us to determine. His influence on this question was not a purely good influence. However, in the *Articles of Religion*, published by authority during this reign, and in the Prayer Book itself as left by Edward, nothing like the doctrine of Transubstantiation was allowed to have place. The Prayer Book, as sanctioned by convocation in the second year of Edward VI., differed in arrangement more than in substance from that now in use. The difference, however, was not inconsiderable. The address to the Virgin Mary, and similar invocations to the angels and the patriarchs, which Henry had allowed to remain, were omitted. But, on the other hand, water was mixed with the wine. The sign of the cross was retained in the Eucharist, in Confirmation, and in the Visitation of the Sick. Baptism was by triple immersion, and was accompanied by exorcising and anointing. In the Burial Service, prayer was offered for the deceased person.*

Transubstantiation
Consubstantiation
Simple Sign

* Strype's *Eccles. Mem.* ii. Cranmer, cc. 13, 14. Collier, ii. 309, 310.

BOOK I.

Second re-
vision of
the Book of
Common
Prayer.

In the following year the book was again submitted to revision, and Bucer was again consulted. His suggestions have been preserved, and show that much remained to be done. He urged that the old clerical habits should be laid aside, since by many they were used superstitiously, and pious men were anxious to discard them; that the priest should place the sacramental bread in the hands of the people, not in their mouths; that all prayer for the dead should cease; that the rubric should not supplicate that the bread and wine might become the body and blood of Christ to the recipient, as such language might seem to savour too much of the doctrine of transubstantiation; that the hallowing of the water, and the sign of the cross in baptism should be dispensed with; and that in the exorcising the language of adjuration should be converted into prayer. In the book, as now revised, the name of the Virgin, the thanksgiving for the patriarchs and prophets, the invocation of the Holy Ghost and of the Word at the Consecration Service, the mixing of water with the wine, and the directions concerning the sign of the cross, were all omitted. In baptism the triple immersion, the cross, the exorcism, and the anointing were all discarded. In the visitation of the sick, the directions for private confession, the anointing, the mention of Tobias and Sarah, and the instructions requiring that the remnants of the consecrated elements should be preserved, were all cancelled. In the Burial Service, prayer for the deceased was rescinded. More simple instructions were given concerning the vestments of the clergy. But the greatest advance in this revision was in its more explicit language concerning the Eucharist. It was now distinctly affirmed that Christ is present with the bread and

wine, only as he is present anywhere in answer to prayer. | CHAP. III.
 In reference to kneeling at the communion, it was stated that it was not meant hereby that any adoration is done, or ought to be done, either to the sacramental bread and wine there bodily received, or to any real or essential presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood. All these changes in the direction of a more decided Protestantism were confirmed by Parliament. The new book came into use in the autumn of 1552.*

Such was the origin of our Book of Common Prayer. It will be seen that it was the production of unsettled times, and of minds too much exposed to opposite influences to allow that it should be remarkable for consistency. Nor did it come, as seems to be commonly supposed, from one source. During the middle age, the offices in use in one province often differed considerably from those in use in another. Not only might one metropolitan differ from another, in his usage in this respect, but diocese often differed from diocese, and even priest from priest. With a certain measure of identity there was a large measure of diversity. In the preamble to the Act of Uniformity passed 1549, we find an allusion to these facts. We are there informed that—‘of long time there hath been had in ‘this realm divers forms of common prayer, commonly ‘called the Service of the Church; that is to say, the ‘Use of Sarum, of York, of Bangor, and of Lincoln; ‘and *besides* the same, now of late, much more divers ‘and sundry forms and fashions have been used in the ‘cathedral and *parish* churches—with divers and sundry

Acts of
 Uniformity
 a Protestant
 innovation.

* Burnet's *Hist. Ref.* iii. 286, *et seq.* Clay's *Prayer-Book Illustrated*, 126. Strype's *Cranmer*. Statutes 5 Ed. VI. c. i.

BOOK I. 'rites and ceremonies concerning matins and evening
 'song, and in the administration of the sacraments of
 'the church;' and that the king, having observed this,
 has 'divers times assayed to stay innovations or new
 'rites. Yet the same hath not had such good success
 'as his highness required—therefore he hath been
 'pleased with the intent to secure a *uniform*, quiet,
 'and godly order, to appoint commissioners, to make
 'one convenient and meet order of common prayer, the
 'which, by the aid of the Holy Ghost, is of them con-
 'cluded.' Of this order it is said that it is to be used
 after such 'form as is contained in the said book, and
 'none other, or otherwise.'*

It will be seen from this language, that the sources from which our Book of Common Prayer was derived, while they were all sufficiently charged with mediævalism, were not all in strict agreement with each other. It will be seen, too, that the rigid uniformity in worship, which the Church of England was to maintain, was a new thing in our history, a Protestant novelty, and one of the special mischiefs which were to result from those new relations between the Church and the State which were brought about by the Reformation.

Character
 of Edward's
 second
 book.

Some of the commissioners under Edward were disposed to retain as much of the mediæval element as possible. Others looked not to fathers or schoolmen, so much as to the more advanced men among the continental reformers. Hence the volume was found to resemble a piece of mosaic, rather than a developed unity. Hoary fragments from the past had their place side by side with startling novelties from the present.

* Statutes Henry VIII.

The teaching of the original 'Uses' was teaching wholly from bygone times; and this was to be only partially displaced by contributions which could be traced to such modern thinkers as Luther, Melancthon, Zwinglius, Peter Martyr, and Bucer. The doctrine of the book concerning the sacraments is not from Rome, nor is it wholly from Germany or Switzerland. It retains a midway complexion of its own. Its theology, including the Forty-two, afterwards the Thirty-nine Articles, was largely taken from Augustine, but it gave a Lutheran prominence to the doctrine of justification by faith, and was otherwise so guarded and explained that it seemed to avoid the extremes of the Calvinistic doctrine, and of the doctrines opposed to it. Such as it was, it must be admitted that the book came very much from the mind of the time, and was, to a large extent, adapted to it. The error in doing what was then done was small, compared with the error of later generations in accepting the possible or expedient in 1552 as the measure of the possible or expedient in their own time. Already there were signs of that great difference of judgment and feeling on such matters which was to lead to such signal results in our history. But the progress made in this respect under Edward presents a landmark in the advancing thought of our country which was not to be obliterated or forgotten. Under Mary all seemed to be reaction, but it soon became manifest that it was a change in the relation of parties among the great men, consequent on the change of sovereigns, and not a change in the real feeling of the nation.

One of the first acts of Elizabeth was to issue injunctions to the magistrates to discountenance the spies

Accession
of Eliza-
beth.

BOOK I. and informers, who had been so much encouraged by her sister in searching out persons suspected of heresy. Some instructions were also given concerning the public worship, which indicated the Protestant tendency of the Queen's policy. Mary's bishops were observant of these signs. One of their number only consented to be present at the coronation of Elizabeth. In the upper house considerable opposition was made to the proposal to restore the ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown. But the majority took the Protestant side, and in the commons the preponderance of such men was much greater.*

Elizabeth's
Book of
Common
Prayer.

The Book of Common Prayer, as presented to parliament soon after the queen's accession, had been revised by a committee consisting of divines and members of the council. It had been prepared from a comparison of the first and second books set forth under Edward. Guest, afterwards bishop of Rochester, appears to have been the person most responsible for the changes introduced. But both Cecil and the queen made their suggestions. Not to give unnecessary umbrage to the catholic, two offensive references to the bishop of Rome were omitted. To gratify the Protestant, the committee of divines proposed that the bread and wine might be taken from the hands of the priest either kneeling or standing. But this was too great a stretch of liberality. In the book as approved by the queen and the parliament, this concession had no place. The kneeling posture was made imperative. In consonance with this proceeding, the words in Edward's second book which defined the Lord's Supper as being

* *Parl. Hist.* i. 643-660. *Strype's Annals*, i. 37, *et seq.*; ii. 392-398. Paper No. 3. *Ellis's Letters*, Second Series, ii. 262.

simply a commemorative rite, were omitted.* This, we are told, was done, 'Because it appears to have been the persuasion of the queen and her council, that in the important question of the Eucharist too much had been done in the reign of Edward VI. in the way of innovation; that the mysteries had been impugned, by excluding words which might suggest, though they did not necessarily involve, the doctrine of the Real Presence.'† What this Presence means it is for Anglicans to explain. The language of the Communion rubric from this time will hardly be interpreted as embracing transubstantiation or consubstantiation, and any conception of the service between those dogmas and the doctrine of Zwinglius it is not easy to comprehend.

In the Prayer Book as finally revised under Edward, there was a clause which defined the influence of the sacraments in a manner more consistent with Protestant thought. Elizabeth cancelled that clause, and space was thus left for the retention of ideas not wholly foreign to the papal teaching on that subject.‡ In

* The words excluded were: 'We do declare that it is not meant thereby that any adoration is done or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread and wine there bodily received, as unto any real and essential presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For as concerning the sacramental bread and wine, they remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians; and as concerning the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ, they are in heaven, and not here; for it is against the truth of Christ's true natural body to be in more places than in one at one time.'

† Cardwell's *Revision of the Liturgie*, 33, 34.

‡ In Edward's service the words of the minister on giving the bread to the communicant were, 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving.' On delivering the cup the minister was to say, 'Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee,

BOOK I. regard to vestments also, Elizabeth followed her brother's first book, which imposed them all, in preference to the second, which enjoined the use of the surplice only.

Nine bishops, and the same number of temporal peers, voted against this book. But when issued, of the 9,400 clergymen then in England, 189 only, of all ranks, became Nonconformists, relinquishing their preferments. Some change was made in the Articles. It was not considerable. But, as in the case of the Liturgy, it showed a tendency to recede from the advanced ground taken under Edward, rather than to go beyond it.*

Penalties
attached to
the Acts of
Supremacy
and Uni-
formity.

The penalties by which the act vesting Ecclesiastical Supremacy in the crown, and the act of Uniformity were enforced, were of a formidable description. All ecclesiastical persons, from the highest to the lowest, and all persons taking degrees in the universities, or holding any civil office, were to bind themselves to obedience according to the tenor of the act of supremacy. And all persons who should, by word or deed, 'advisedly, maliciously, and directly affirm' anything contrary to this act, were liable, for the first offence, to the forfeiture of lands and goods; for a second, to the penalty of the premunire statute, which added excommunication and

'and be thankful.' The first of these forms was enlarged thus under Elizabeth: '*The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life, and take and eat this,*' &c. &c. The second form was enlarged thus: '*The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life, and drink this in remembrance,*' &c. &c. *Liturgies of Edward VI.* 279. *Liturgical Services*, 195. *Parker Society's Publications.*

* Strype's *Annals*, 104-124. Burnet's *Hist.* Ref. iv. No. 55.

outlawry to forfeiture; and the third offence became high treason. Concerning the Book of Common Prayer, the clergyman not duly using it, or chargeable with doing or uttering anything in depreciation of it, was to be fined to the value of his living for one year, and to be imprisoned six months. By a second offence, his preferment was wholly forfeited; and a third subjected him to imprisonment for life. The punishment of a layman offending against this act was, in the first instance, imprisonment during one year; imprisonment during life in the second instance; and the third subjected him to the loss of lands and goods. It was further enacted, that all persons failing to attend their parish church, or some recognised place of worship, on the Lord's day, should pay the fine of one shilling for each absence, unless reasonable cause for such absence could be shown.*

The enforcement of these rigid provisions concerning ecclesiastical matters pertained mainly to the Court of High Commission. This court consisted of certain commissioners, appointed under the Great Seal of England, who were empowered to determine what should be accounted 'error, heresy, or schism,' and in fact to correct every kind of ecclesiastical irregularity. But it was provided that these commissioners should not judge anything to be heresy which had not been so determined 'by the authority of the canonical scriptures, 'or by the first four general councils, or any of them, or 'by any other general council, wherein the same was 'declared heresy by the express and plain words of 'scripture, or such as shall be hereafter judged, ordered, 'or determined to be heresy by the High Court of

Court of
High Com-
mission.

* Statutes 1 Eliz. cc. 1, 2, 3.

BOOK I. 'Parliament, with the assent of the clergy in convocation.* It will be seen from this language, that while the function of this court was purely administrative, the latitude of interpretation left open to it was of the most dangerous description. It is no marvel that its place in our history should have become so memorable. It fell with the monarchy, and it contributed, in an eminent degree, to bring about that fall.

Rise of the
Noncon-
formist con-
troversy.

From this point commences the great Nonconformist controversy. The seeds of Puritanism among us are no doubt as old as the time of Wycliffe. But its development in our history as the characteristic of a party, dates from the time of Edward VI. It should be remembered also, that what was then Puritanism in England, was simply Protestantism on the continent. This difference may be traced to the fact, that while in the other countries of Europe the Reformation came from the will of the people, and was greatly moulded by that will, in England, the movement was much more dependent on the will of the state. From this cause, the change in the English church, even at the death of Edward VI., left her in a nearer relation to the church of the middle age than any other church in christendom avowing itself Protestant.

During the dispensation of the Six Articles under Henry, many good men became exiles. Rogers, the first martyr under Mary, and Bishop Hooper, the type of English Puritanism under Edward, were among the number of those exiles. By their residence abroad, these devout persons became familiar with continental Protestantism, and changes which had commended themselves to the learning and piety of their personal friends

* 1 Eliz. c. 1.

in those distant countries, they regarded as not unsuited to a reformed church at home. The ministers in those churches wore a ministerial dress in their public services, but they had cast off the surplice and the other popish garments. In the judgment of Hooper they had done well in so doing. When chosen to be a bishop, he claimed that he might be left at liberty to follow their example. But the age which allowed diversity of use in such things had passed. Even Cranmer and Ridley were resolute in insisting on his conformity. Strange to say, to bring their good brother to obedience in this matter, they sent him to the discipline of the Fleet Prison.* The reign of Mary, and the temper of Elizabeth's administration, precipitated discussion on subjects of this nature. During the dark days before Elizabeth's accession, the popish habits had been everywhere flaunted in the face of the suffering Protestants. The monk's hood and the priest's robe had become more than ever the emblems of an execrated tyranny, and they were execrated accordingly.

Elizabeth could not conceal from herself that this feeling in relation to the papal worship generally, was not confined to a few, but common to nearly all persons who could be accounted Protestants. The best educated men, and the most earnest men, among the parochial clergy, and nearly the whole of the new bishops, were strongly in favour of a further reformation.† Such was the resistance to her majesty's policy, that six years after her accession uniformity was far from being established. Some ministers fixed the communion table in the chancel;

Strength of
Puritanism
—policy of
the Queen.

* Strype's *Eccles. Mem.* ii. Bk. ii. c. 28. Fox. Burnet.

† 'In the earlier years of Elizabeth,' says Mr. Hallam, 'the advocates of a simpler ritual numbered the most learned and distinguished portion of the hierarchy.' *Const. Hist.* i. 193.

BOOK I. some removed it to other parts of the church; some dressed the table in one manner, some in another; some administered baptism from a font, some from a basin; 'some used the sign of the cross, others not; some officiated in a surplice, some without; some with a square cap, some with a round cap, some with a button cap, some with a hat, some in scholar's clothes, some in others.'* The queen was not a little displeased as reports of these things came to her. And the time had now come in which her policy was to be no longer doubtful. The bishops who had been disposed to a more liberal course were made to see that the probable consequences of further resistance were of a very serious description. But the effect was to widen differences, not to remove them. Very soon the Puritan controversy extended itself to questions of much more significance than the form of a priest's cap, or the colour of his pulpit dress.

Points at issue between the Court, Clergy, and the Puritans

The Puritans of the later years of Elizabeth, while sternly rejecting the supremacy of the pope, were far from ceding to the crown all the authority which had been vested in it in relation to the church. The injunction, 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' must, they said, have been addressed to the people or to their ministers. It could not have been addressed to princes or magistrates. They did not deny that there might be pious Romanists; but the church of Rome, in their estimation, was not a true church, nor was its bishop a true bishop. The scriptures alone, and not ecclesiastical precedents, however venerable, or the deductions of reason, however plausible, were their standard in regard

* Strype's *Annals*, i. c. 29; ii. c. 41. Neal, 193-196. Sparrow's *Collections*.

to doctrine or polity, and nothing was to be accepted as Christian which could not be deduced from that source of instruction, or be shown to be in harmony with it. The authority to interpret Scripture, moreover, implied in this maxim, was vested, as they maintained, in the church, and not in the state, and in the individual conscience more than in external authority of any kind. Matters which the example or teaching of the inspired writers had left indifferent, no authority could have a right to make necessary. Religion, in the view of the Puritan, was the action of each man's moral and spiritual consciousness towards God. What is more—in the judgment of those grave Calvinistic men, it was an action in all cases of a divine origin—beginning with God, and not with man. To sin against such personal convictions, accordingly, in deference to any external power whatsoever, was to sin against God, and to be conformed to them was to be followers of God. It was assumed, that the function of the magistrate, if he would acquit himself as God's minister, was to give effect to the will of such men. The church was a theocracy, but a theocracy in which the inspiration was to ascend upwards from the people, not downwards from the state, nor even from a priesthood.*

It will be seen that these were large questions, presenting a wide field for discussion. Hooker, with that high and solemn sweep of thought which characterized him, had insisted that law is eternal and immutable; that everything of the nature of law in the Bible must be in accordance with the antecedent law existing in the nature of things, and in the Divine nature itself; and that men do not honour God when they insist that he is

Progress of
the controversy—
Hooker.

* Strype's *Annals*. *Life of Parker*, *passim*. Neal, i. 123.

BOOK I. to be heard only through the oracles of revelation, and not through those other oracles which are much older and equally his own. But the Puritan, without rejecting what is called the light of nature, replied, that the fact of a special revelation supposed an insufficiency in that prior light, either from its having become faint and obscure, or from an inability in man to follow it wisely induced by sin. Our security, accordingly, must be supposed to consist in our following, with a scrupulous fidelity, the new guidance which has been specially adapted to our weakness. If the Puritans often made too little of the revelations supplied by reason and nature, it is no less clear that Hooker sometimes made too much of the illumination to be derived from these sources.

Every city and town, and almost every parish and family, became agitated by this controversy—one party holding to the sufficiency of Scripture and the right of private judgment; and the other pleading for a wider authority, and for deference as due to a more general judgment both in church and state. Cambridge, especially, became a great battle-field between these two parties, who were represented there, through nearly the whole of this reign, by Cartwright on the one side, and Whitgift on the other. But down to 1575, seventeen years after the queen's accession, the great majority of the Puritan ministers remained within the pale of the established church, though before that time some of their leaders had not scrupled to publish their dissent from the whole framework of the hierarchy, and to urge that a Presbyterian polity should be established in its stead. They formed local organizations for the multiplication of religious services in particular towns and districts: and

associations for 'prophesying,' which consisted of meetings among ministers for the mutual exposition of Scripture, and the cultivation of their gifts as public teachers. The more learned among the clergy, and the most popular preachers, were generally the leading men in these exercises. But Elizabeth became jealous of these proceedings. She saw in them a form of power not sufficiently subject to her own power. Sending for Archbishop Grindal, she 'declared herself offended at the number of preachers, as well as at the exercises, urging that it was good for the church to have few preachers, that three or four in a county might suffice, and that the reading of homilies to the people was enough.' The archbishop wrote to her majesty on these topics, showing, at great length, the reasons which satisfied him that faithfulness to his office demanded that he should not attempt to conform himself in the exercise of it to what seemed to be her majesty's desire. The letter is a noble one. But Elizabeth not only suppressed the prophesyings, she sequestered the archbishop, and allowed him to remain in disgrace from 1576 to 1582, when he died.*

Whitgift, who succeeded Grindal, threw a special bitterness into this controversy during the last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign. It was during this interval that the notorious Marprelate tracts made their appearance. If those productions were not all from the same hand, they were all marked by the same severity and levity of style. Their grand assault is on Whitgift, and on the court of High Commission. They are freely charged with wit, humour, sarcasm, and invective. The

The Marprelate Tracts.

* Strype's *Annals*, ii. *passim*. *Life of Parker*. *Grindal*, 329. Ap. No. 9.

BOOK I.

public were startled by them. They found readers, not only among the crowd, but among the gay gentlemen at court. They were printed at a secret press, which was removed from place to place with singular adroitness and rapidity. Much pains were taken to implicate the Puritans in this libellous onslaught, as it was deemed, on the rule of the bishops; but Martin declared that no man was responsible for his deeds. He appears to have stood alone, or to have been one of a small number of men who preferred conducting their warfare after this independent and guerilla fashion. Grave replies to these attacks produced no effect. After a while, several of the low play-writers about town were engaged to answer Martin in the scurrilous style familiar to them. We think it probable that Bancroft, bishop of London, had something to do with bringing these respectable auxiliaries into the field. Happily for the credit of religion, this form of the controversy was of short duration.*

Origin and
growth of
Separation.

The reader has seen that the complaint of the Puritans was not against the union of Church and State, but against an alleged encroachment of the state on the liberty of the church. But early in this reign men make their appearance who claim the right, not only to remonstrate with the magistrate when his authority in regard to religion is supposed to be unwisely exercised, but the right to act in independence of his authority in such cases. The Puritan, on finding the state not so enlightened in its action in this respect, according to his judgment, as it should be, might petition and expostulate, but those means failing, he had no further

* Bacon, *Touching the Controversies of the Church*. Fuller's *Church Hist.* v. 130. Maskel's *Martin Marprelate*. Bell's *Life of Marlowe*. Collier's *Annals of the Stage*, i. 273-275.

remedy. His principles were not such as to free him from this inconvenient control by prompting him to reject it altogether. State authority may become to him an almost intolerable burden, but still he must be a state churchman. But the question naturally came—If the state may err, and if petition and expostulation against its errors shall be fruitless, does not separate and independent action then become both a right and a duty? Conscientious men soon began to answer this question in the affirmative. The origin of such ideas in our history is commonly attributed to a clergyman named Robert Brown, who was kinsman to the great Cecil, her majesty's secretary of state. But it is certain, that before Brown entered upon his apostleship, there was a church in London which owed its origin to such thinking. To Brown, however, belongs the honour of being the first man in English history to avow the great principle of religious liberty in the form in which we now hold it. Personally, Brown was not a man to bring much credit to any principle or to any party. His sufferings on account of his opinions, and of the freedom with which he acted upon them, were such, during a great part of his life, as to oblige us to regard him as conscientious. But he was a man of a restless and violent temper; and though he left many followers, the leaders among the Separatists who succeeded him would not acknowledge themselves his disciples. Nor does it appear that those later Separatists retained Brown's principle concerning the severance of churches from all relation to the state in the explicit and absolute form in which he had announced it.

But Thacker, Copping, Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry are the names of men who said—When the magis-

BOOK I. trate commands what is unchristian, it becomes Christian men not to obey, but to follow the law of their conscience, wholly irrespective of the law of the state. Even these men often lament that state authority is not exercised in the support of faith and order, according to their view of such matters, and seem to imply that submission to such rule would be a duty. But to no such rule as was then prevalent would they submit. They all became practically, and to a great extent theoretically, Congregationalists or Independents, and would acknowledge no external authority incompatible with the measure of self-government inseparable from churches of that order.

It was in vain that these men avowed their loyalty, and their readiness to submit in all civil matters to the civil power. They did not submit to that power as an authority in religion. They would not be bound by it. In common with the Puritan, they accepted the doctrine of the English church, but they claimed the liberty to reject all things in its polity and worship which in their judgment were not accordant with Scripture. They were reminded that to resist the ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown was as truly sedition as to resist its civil supremacy; that the authority of the sovereign in both relations came from the same source, and rested on the same foundations. But whatever name might be given to such disobedience, it was a part of the religion of these persons to affirm, that in regard to religious matters the magistrate was not the ultimate judge. On such questions the final authority was the individual conscience and the Creator. The sentence passed on these men, as proper to persons holding and avowing such opinions, was, that they should die—be hanged! To

lay claim to the liberty which our laws have long since ceded to our whole people, was to incur that heavy forfeiture—to die as the highwayman or the midnight murderer dies!

Barrow was a gentleman of Gray's Inn. Thacker, Copping, and Greenwood were ministers. Penry was a native of Wales, had studied in Cambridge, graduated in Oxford, and is admitted by his enemies to have been a young man of sound mental culture, and of deep religious feeling. It is quite true that Barrow and Penry showed themselves to be men of a warm temper, and that they sometimes expressed themselves, in print and otherwise, in strong and irreverent language towards the ruling clergy. But strong protest is often all that is left to the weak when opposed to the strong. The ideas enunciated by these men did not die. Sectaries multiplied rapidly in the face of all this terror. Sir Walter Raleigh declared in Parliament, towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, that the religionists of this order in Norfolk and in parts about London, were not less than twenty thousand. Such, the reader will mark, were the early experiences of Congregationalism in English history.*

It is not difficult to understand how rulers in Church and State have come to attach so much importance to religious conformity. Obedience in that form is interpreted as a confession that not merely the outward, but the inward—the will, should be subject to the sway of those authorities. This was evidently the light in which such submission was viewed both by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. Hence no form of their power was really

Principles involved in this controversy.

* Strype's *Annals*, iv. 246-251. *Whitgift*, ii. 42-50, 175-193. Waddington's *Congregational Martyrs and Life of Penry*.

BOOK I.

so precious to them as the supremacy with which they were invested in respect to conscience. To resist them in their proceedings with regard to religion was to wound them in the most sensitive part of their nature. Elizabeth, moreover, though no doubt bound to Protestantism by conviction as well as by circumstances, was a lady with some dangerous tastes. The crucifix and the altar lights retained in her chapel, betrayed a sympathy with the pomp and symbolism of the Roman worship which her brother Edward, and the reformers generally in his time, would have looked upon with surprise and apprehension. But steady as was her determination to assert her supremacy in this department of rule, the very circumstances which had given her so much power had subjected that supremacy to some strong and special limitations. She possessed the freedom of a Protestant sovereign, but she was never allowed to forget that she could be strong only through the loyalty of a Protestant people. She might flatter herself that she spoke and acted by a divine right; but she was to feel that the opponents of her policy could take the same ground.

The divine right of conscience and the divine right of kings.

According to the conscience of the Romanist, it was the command of God that the pope, and not the queen, should be the head of the church. According to the conscience of the Puritan, if it was the will of Christ that there should be a union between the state and the church, it was no less clearly His will that the state should show all reverence toward the liberties of the church. According to the conscience of the Independent also, it became him to assert, that his faith and worship were to be determined by his own judgment as to the will of God in relation to such matters, and not by injunctions coming to him from any earthly poten-

tate. In all these cases there was a principle of divided allegiance. In all, if there were things which were to be given to Cæsar, there were also things which were to be given only to God. There were seasons in which the queen would gladly have coerced all these parties, so as to have rendered them powerless; but together, they made up nearly her whole people. To have crushed them would have been to have left herself without subjects. Among all these delinquents, the Independents must have been, according to the feeling of Elizabeth, the most delinquent. The Catholic who resisted her will in favour of his ancient church; and the Puritan who did so in favour of his limited scheme of freedom, must have been, in her view, modest men, compared with the man who presumed to oppose his private judgment to the sovereign wisdom of the state, and of her majesty as its head. Apart from this doctrine concerning the divine right of conscience, the doctrine concerning the divine right of kings in our history would have had the field very largely to itself. The Puritan, both in the pulpit and in the senate, was to place the curb that was needed on the power of Elizabeth, and was to have his mission in that form when the sceptre passed from the Tudors to the Stuarts.

The religion of the Romanist in that age was the religion of secrecy. The priest moved abroad in every sort of disguise. His rites were administered in concealed apartments, and under the cover of the night, where no eye could see, no ear could listen. The loss of all things, even of life itself, was the hazard incurred by the practice of the most sacred observances of that church. Religion in such circumstances often became a religion of intense passion, of endless intrigue, of bitter disloyalty, and of

BOOK I. deadly resolves. The Puritan gloried in a Protestant queen and in a Protestant government, and never ceased striving to bring both into a nearer conformity to his own pure Protestant convictions. His loyalty was impassioned, his repugnance to Romanism was deeply rooted, and his consciousness of spiritual security, hope, and happiness, as derived from his firm beliefs, was such as his opponents could rarely understand. Religious services, religious books, and religious companionships, all of the Puritan type, were the atmosphere in which the spiritual life of men and women, of age and youth, grew and expanded into a nameless sense of rightness and of rest. What the drama, and the common sports of the time, were to others, religious services were to such persons—and more. They often travelled far in search of such pleasures, and braved the utmost rather than suffer the loss of them. All this was true of the Protestant Separatists—true of these in a still stronger sense. With them the good was realised at a greater peril, and was prized accordingly as a richer good. There are spirits whose hunger in this form is as for bread to the perishing—whose thirst is as that of David for water from the well of Bethlehem.



CHAPTER IV.

Religious Life in England from the Death of Elizabeth to the Restoration.

JAMES of Scotland, subsequently king of England, in addressing the General Assembly in Edinburgh in 1590, described the service of 'our neighbour kirk of England' as an 'evil said mass in English.' Even the service of Geneva did not fully accord with his majesty's standard of purity. So late as 1598 the royal orator could discourse about 'Papistical and Anglican bishops,' as functionaries who were not likely to find favour in his eyes, pledging himself to 'stand by the church' and the 'ministry' of Scotland. But in the next year the King penned certain councils to his son, in a work entitled *Basilicon Doron*, which were characterized by another tone of expression concerning the Puritans of the north. 'Take heed, therefore, my son,' said the writer, 'to such Puritans, very pests in the church and commonwealth, whom no deserts can oblige, nor oaths nor promises bind, breathing nothing but seditions and calumnies, aspiring without measure, railing without reason, and making

CHAP. IV.

James loses
his love of
Presbytery.

BOOK I. 'their own imaginations, without any warrant from
 'the Word, the square of their conscience. I protest
 'before the great God, and as I am here upon my
 'testament it is no place for me to lie in, that ye
 'shall never find with any highland or border thieves
 'greater ingratitude, and more lies and vile perjuries,
 'than with these fanatic spirits. And suffer not the
 'principal of them to brook your land, if you like to
 'rest in it.' This book was printed in 1603, and
 copies of it were in the hands of persons in England
 before his majesty crossed the border.* Parsons, the
 Jesuit, writing to a friend, says the pope has seen the
 book, has been much delighted with it, and hopes the
 king may become a good Catholic.† Another Jesuit
 writes about the same time, expressing his surprise at
 the favourable tone of the publication towards the
 professors of his faith.‡ His majesty's language, as
 above cited, will be interpreted by candid men as the lan-
 guage of passion more than of truth. But the English
 Puritans might well look with apprehension toward the
 accession of a monarch who had betrayed such feeling.

The Puri-
 tan petition.

Soon after James came into England a petition was
 presented to him of a large body of the Puritan clergy.
 The document had been circulated through about half
 the counties of England, and had received more than
 800 clerical signatures. James received it with apparent

* 'I know not whether you have seen the king's book before, but I
 send it you at all ventures, for it is new here.' Chamberlain's *Letter*,
 March 30, 1603. State Paper Office. Domestic Series, vol. i. Calder-
 wood's *Church of Scotland*, 256-418. Spotswood's *History*, 456-468.

† MS. State Paper Office. Domestic Series, vol. i. No. 84.

‡ *Ibid.* vol. i. No. 118. It appears also that in 1603 extracts from
 the king's book were translated and printed in French. *Ibid.* vol. v.
 No. 67.

respect, and promised that a day should be fixed when deputations from the parties at issue on the points to which the petition referred, should be convened, and the whole subject should be considered.

In this memorable paper the petitioners protest against being accounted disorderly or disloyal in what they do, and they pray that certain things connected with the worship and discipline of the church, the manner of appointing its ministers to their livings, and the qualifications of such persons, may be reformed. With regard to baptism, it was urged that it should no longer be administered in any case by women, and that the sign of the cross, and the questions usually put to the infant, should be dispensed with. It was further sought that the ring might not be used in the ceremony of marriage; that confirmation might be abolished; that the lessons from the Apocrypha in the public service might be omitted; that no ministers should be obliged to wear the cap and surplice, or to encourage the people in an observance of holidays, or in bowing at the name of Jesus; that the sanctity of the Lord's-day might be more strictly enforced, the church service abridged, and certain improvements attempted in its psalmody. It was, moreover, prayed, that all clergymen should be obliged to be resident on their cures, be capable of preaching, and be so employed at least once on the Sabbath. Finally, it was urged that subscription in future should be restricted to the doctrines of religion, and to the article of his majesty's supremacy; that it should not have respect to the offices of the church generally; and that certain laws, and forms of proceeding, pertaining to the ecclesiastical courts should be reformed.*

* *Phœnix Britannicus*. Neal's *History of the Puritans*, ii. 5, 6.

BOOK I.

Action of
the Univer-
sities.

Oxford and Cambridge rose against the petitioners. The Oxford divines declared that the proposed changes tended to anarchy, and that they were especially adverse to that 'supereminent authority always pertaining to the regal person of a king.' Cambridge resolved to disown any man impugning the doctrine or discipline of the church, and would deprive him of any degree he might have taken from her hands.*

Hampton
Court con-
ference.

Somewhat more than six months had intervened since the Puritans had presented their petition, when James issued a proclamation which prohibited all writing and petitioning on the subject of reforms in religious matters, on pain of his displeasure. When the time for holding this long-expected conference arrived, the first day was occupied by the king and the prelates in discussions preliminary to their meeting with the Puritan ministers. James was scarcely more vain of being thought an absolute king than of being esteemed a profound divine. It is said, accordingly, that on this day 'his majesty was pleased to play the Puritan;' and indulged so far in that humour, that the bishops, on their knees, entreated him 'that nothing might be altered, lest Papists and 'Puritans should have occasion to insult upon them, as 'men who had travelled to bind them to that which, by 'their own mouths, was now confessed to be erroneous.'† Reasoning of this sort, whether avowed or not, is always potent in such cases. With the opponents of innovation, to confess error in the past, must be to lose power in the future. The king, having sufficiently alarmed the prelates, soon made them aware that nothing was further from his thoughts than to take part against them.

* Strype's *Annals*, iv. 522, 523. Neal, ii. 6-8.

† Calderwood, 474.

On the following day, four Puritan ministers, chosen by James himself, were opposed to nearly twenty prelates or other dignitaries, in the presence of the members of the council and of a crowd of courtiers, his majesty seated as moderator. The account of this conference, published by Dean Barlow, from which nearly all subsequent narratives have been taken, has evidently, to use the language of Fuller, 'a sharp edge on one side.' Either the published report is not trustworthy, or the Puritans, so outnumbered and so browbeaten, must have been so far abashed as to have failed to do justice to their cause. Something was said, it seems, in favour of the clerical meetings called *prophesyings*, which Elizabeth had suppressed; upon which his majesty, interrupting the discussion, exclaimed, 'If you aim at a Scotch presbytery, it agrees as well with monarchy as God with the devil.' Having in this manner betrayed the real source of his ecclesiastical preferences, the king proceeded, in the same vein of incautious self-disclosure, to expatiate on his spiritual supremacy, concluding his discourse by turning to the bishops, touching his hat, and saying, 'My lords, I may thank you that these men plead for my supremacy. They think they cannot make their party good against you, but by appealing to it. But if once you are out, and they are in, I know what will become of my supremacy—for no bishop, no king.*' It was not without reason that Sir John Harrington, himself no Puritan, described James as using 'upbraiding,' rather than argument. 'He told them,' says Sir John, 'that they wanted to strip Christ again, and bid them away with their snivelling. The bishops seemed much pleased, and said his majesty

* *Phœnix Britannicus*.

BOOK I. 'spoke by the power of inspiration. I wist not what 'they mean—but the spirit was rather foul-mouthed.'* In conclusion, the king, addressing himself to Dr. Reynolds, the most considerable of the Puritan clergy present, said, 'If this be all your party has to say, I 'will make them conform themselves, or else harry them 'out of the land, or do worse.' Bishop Bancroft declared that the world had not seen such a king since the time of Christ. Whitgift was sure that his majesty had spoken by the Spirit of God. Chancellor Egerton was amazed to see the king and the priest so wonderfully united in the same person!

Effect of
the King's
policy on
the Puri-
tans.

This whole scene might pass as a pleasant comedy, did we know nothing of the seeds of tragedy which lay under it. It will be seen, that in comparison with the high Presbyterian demands of many among the Puritans in the last reign, the petition now presented was remarkable for its moderation. It asked nothing that might not reasonably have been granted. On such easy terms the party might have been bound in honour to silence and submission, at least for the space of another generation. The primacy of Whitgift had brought so much trouble upon the Puritans, that they were content, it seems, so far to limit their claims as to allow their opponents an opportunity of seeming to be compliant, without the suspicion of being vanquished.

The ministers at Hampton Court were left to make their communication to their brethren, consisting of many more than the men whose names were attached to the petition; and by those persons the report would be extended to a much larger number still, who were more

* *Nugæ Antiquæ*, i. 181.

or less of the same judgment. Every ministerial gathering would be full of talk concerning what had happened. What the king had said, how he had mocked the ministers, and how his courtiers had derided them, would be told at every Puritan fireside in city and county, and would there call forth free comment. The feeling of wounded loyalty, and the sense of wrong and insult thus awakened, would become common in a few weeks to the most thoughtful, virtuous, and religious portion of the English people. What had taken place would be sure to influence the tone of Puritan teaching from the pulpit, and from house to house. Puritan laymen, as they trod the accustomed walk toward their parish church, would be heard to say, 'The king has told our ministers that to be a Puritan is to be a covert traitor. If we would have favour from his majesty, we must, it seems, surrender our conscience, and become disloyal to God. It is clear that the smiles of royalty are to be reserved for a sleek court priesthood, and that frowns only are to fall to the lot of ourselves and of our preachers. Truly, we have come to serious times. Whatever can be done towards limiting a power exercised so ill should assuredly be done. If thus driven from court, we must look more than ever to our footing in parliament. The elections are at hand—we must see what may be done then.'

This was manifestly the tendency given to the better portion of the mind of England by the conduct of the king. In every parliament of this reign the Puritan element will be found to be dominant. Even the stern will of Elizabeth had given way before antagonism in this form. The mirth of the king when opposed to Puritanism at Hampton Court, was changed into a sober

BOOK I. sadness as he found himself obliged to face that enemy in the halls of legislation.

Persecution
of the
Puritans.

But his majesty was little suspicious of the experiences which awaited him. His threat of severe dealing with the ecclesiastical malcontents became a reality. The bishops were forthwith enjoined to cleanse the church of the disaffected. 'The poor Puritan ministers,' says a contemporary, 'have been ferreted out of all corners, and some of them suspended—others deprived of their livings. Certain lecturers are silenced; and a crew of gentlemen, of Northamptonshire, who put up a petition to the king on their behalf, told roundly of their boldness, both at the Council table and Star chamber; and Sir Francis Hastings for drawing the petition, and standing to it when he had so done, is put from his lieutenancy and justiceship of the peace in his shire. Sir Edward Montague, and Sir Valentine Knightly, for refusing to subscribe to a submission, have the like sentence.'*

What the Puritans, and the friends of the Puritans, were in Northamptonshire, they were over the greater part of England. Indeed, the number of the clergy who would not become in all things Conformists was found to be so great, that the government deemed it wise to exercise more forbearance than had been at first contemplated. But this halt was not made until some three hundred clergymen had been deprived or suspended.†

* Winwood's *Memorials*, ii. 48.

† Some of the Puritans, as in the last reign, resigned their clerical office rather than submit to the terms imposed on them. Dr. Burgess, an eminent person of that class, and a powerful preacher, took to the practice of medicine. The doctor was called in this capacity to attend the great court lady, the Duchess of Bedford, and so coupled spiritual

To the end of this reign the Puritans were divided into two classes, those who limited their objections to certain ceremonies, and those who would have vested more of the discipline and government of the church in the hands of ministers and people. Both acknowledged the ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown, but both would have restricted the action of that supremacy to things regarded as sanctioned by Holy Scripture. All were agreed in holding the maxim, that nothing could be law in England, except as made to be such by an act of the Legislature. The court of High Commission, and even the houses of Convocation, possessed no legislative power. The decisions of the former

CHAP. IV.
Puritan
opinion
during this
reign.

instruction with his medical skill, that the lady became a convert to Puritanism, to the great amazement of her gay connexions. A French gentleman, who had heard the doctor pray with the duchess, was so much interested, that in his simplicity he commended the reverend practitioner very earnestly to the king. James was so excited on finding that the Nonconformist had dared to 'dogmatize' in his court, that he commanded the archbishop to look to it. Bancroft sent for the culprit, used him somewhat roughly, and forbade his practising in his profession anywhere within ten miles of London! Carleton's *Letter*, August 1, 1603. MSS., S. P. O. *Domestic Series*. We further learn, that the next year Mr. Secretary Winwood and his lady chose to reside in an indifferent house at Isleworth, a little beyond the reach of the archbishop's Ten-mile Act, that they might avail themselves of the services of the banished man. *Ibid. Letter*, March 3, 1604. What marvel if the affection of Puritans for Stuart rule was not very ardent? It was in the following terms that the Archbishop of York wrote concerning these men when summoned to join in this crusade against them: 'I have received letters from your lordship, and others of his majesty's most honourable Privy Council, containing two points—first, that the Puritans be proceeded against according to law, except they conform themselves * * * * The Puritans, whose fanatical zeal I dislike, though they differ in ceremonies and accidents, yet they agree with us in the substance of religion, and I think *all*, or *most part* of *them*, love his majesty, and the present State.' *Ibid.* ii. 40.

BOOK I. were to be simply administrative, and the canons of the latter were deemed a nullity without the sanction of the state. Hence, according to the Puritans, the very formidable book of canons adopted by the Convocation of 1604, was wanting in authority, inasmuch as, though approved by the crown, they had not been confirmed by parliament. Prosecutions founded on such a basis, they described as illegal, and they protested against them as such.*

The King obtains an unconstitutional opinion from the council and the judges.

James was by no means pleased on finding talk of this kind abroad. To put an end to uncertainty on this question, his majesty summoned the judges and law officers of the crown into the Star Chamber, where inquiries bearing on this point were submitted to them. The lords of the council, it appears, felt no scruple in raising the prerogative to almost any height in such matters. The judges, and especially Coke, the attorney-general, pleaded for the supremacy of parliament; but, in the end, the majority were pleased to affirm that the king might give the authority of law to regulations for the government of the church, and that the royal commissioners might be required to see them enforced. It was also declared, that persons framing petitions to the king, procuring signatures to them, and stating

* Lord Burleigh could show very cleverly how matters stood in this respect under Elizabeth when occasion arose for doing so. Writing to his son, Sir Robert Cecil, he says: 'The allegation of the popish ministers in Paris, noting that her majesty did promise favour and afterwards did show extremities to the Catholics, is false. For her majesty at her entry prohibited all change in the form of religion as she found it by law, and when by law it was otherwise ordered by parliament, she did command the observation of the law newly established, punishing the offenders only according to law. So her majesty's actions are justifiable at all times, having never punished any evil subject but by warrant of law.' Murdin's *State Papers*, 666.

therein that many thousands of his majesty's subjects CHAP. IV. would be discontented if the suit should be denied, will be guilty of an offence approaching very near to felony and treason. So his majesty was empowered to legislate, to oppress, and to compel his victims to be silent under their suffering.*

In 1603, Whitgift was succeeded in the see of Canterbury by Bancroft, a passionate and intolerant man, who, in temper and principles, was much more a Papist than a Protestant. During the next seven years the new primate allowed the Puritans no rest. For the most part, the sufferers continued to conform. But they ceased not to discuss their differences with their opponents; and the grounds of debate, as may be supposed, were rather widened than narrowed. In 1610, Bancroft was succeeded by Abbot, a man of another order, under whom the Puritans had an interval of comparative quiet.

One good result followed from the conference at Hampton Court. It was urged by the Puritan ministers New translation of the Bible.

* The canons of 1604 declared that any man who should question the authority of that assembly as representing the church of England; should affirm clergy or laity to be exempt from its control; should describe the church as not being an 'apostolical' church, or the Book of Common Prayer as containing 'anything repugnant to Scripture,' should be excommunicated. And the excommunicated person, it should be remembered, was not only excluded from the communion of the church, but was made incapable of suing for his lands or debts, of serving on a jury, or of giving evidence as a witness. But the courts at Westminster would not own any authority in the canons of 1604 as touching body or goods, and often issued their prohibitions to protect the subject against the civil consequences of the spiritual censures pronounced by the clergy on the basis of those decisions. Coke understood these things, and, with all his faults, was commonly on the side of English law and English right. Winwood, i. 22-25; Neal, ii. 35-37.

BOOK I.

that there should be a new or revised translation of the Bible, and to that suggestion we owe our present version. This work was completed in 1611.*

The Book
of Sports.

But along with this measure came another of a very different description. The great majority of the gentlemen and of the magistrates through the provinces, were more or less the friends of the Puritan clergy, and were disposed, through influence from that quarter, to enforce a somewhat strict observance of the Lord's-day. The king, and certain of the clergy who were much about him, were by no means pleased with these proceedings. On the plea that upon this ground Romanists were wont to describe Protestantism as gloomy and unsocial, his majesty issued a proclamation, requiring that when divine service had closed, persons should not 'be discouraged from any lawful recreations, such as dancing, either of men or women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any such harmless recreation, nor having of May games, Whitsun ales or morris dances, or setting-up of May-poles, or other sports therewith used, so as the same may be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or let of divine service.' The sports pronounced unlawful on the Lord's-day were bear-baiting and bull-baiting.† The Puritans, ministers and laity, everywhere regarded this proclamation as a license from

* Collier's *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 692-694. Lewis's *History of Translations*; Anderson's *Annals of the English Bible*. The conduct of James in this matter was highly commendable. He wrote to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and to the universities, urging that the services of the most competent men might be secured, and that the patronage of the church should be exercised so as to ensure to them an adequate compensation for their labour. MSS., S. P. O. *Domestic Series*, Vol. viii. No. 117; xii. No. 73.

† Collier's *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 711, 712.

the throne to desecrate a day which the Scriptures had declared should be sacred; and many who were not Puritans censured the proceeding. Among the causes of the troubles in the next reign, a conspicuous place must be assigned to the king's 'dancing book,' as this ill-judged proclamation came to be designated.

How the feeling stood between the monarch and the parliament on such questions may be seen in the address, or rather complaint, presented to his majesty by his first house of commons at the close of their first session. 'For matter of religion,' say these grave commoners, 'it will appear, by examination of truth and right, that your majesty should be misinformed if any man should deliver that the kings of England have any absolute power in themselves either to alter religion (which God defend should be in the power of any mortal man whatsoever), or to make any laws concerning the same, otherwise than in temporal causes, by consent of parliament. We have not come in any Puritan or Brownist spirit to introduce their parity, or to work the subversion of the state ecclesiastical as now it standeth—things so far and so clearly from our meaning, that with uniform consent in the beginning of this parliament, we committed a member to the Tower who, out of that humour, in a petition presented to this house, slandered the bishops. We disputed not of matters of faith and doctrine; our desire was peace only, and our device of unity, how this lamentable and long-lurking dissension among the ministers, from which atheism, and sects, and all ill life have received such encouragement, and such dangerous increase, might at length, before help come too late, be extinguished. Our desire hath also been

BOOK I. 'to reform certain abuses, crept into the ecclesiastical state
 'even as into the temporal; and lastly, that the land
 'might be furnished with a learned and religious and
 'godly ministry, for the maintenance of whom we would
 'have granted no small contributions, had we found that
 'correspondency from others.* The king was deeply
 displeased before. These calm but resolute words only
 added to his excitement. 'As God shall judge me,' said
 his majesty, 'I had rather live like a hermit than be a
 'king over such a people as the pack of Puritans that
 'overrules the lower house.'† But James was to find
 that the command of the house would be in the hands of
 that pack of Puritans to the end of his days.

It must not be supposed that the king was alone in

* The paper from which these citations are made was presented to the house by Sir Thomas Ridgeway. Hume, who describes it as the work of Sir Francis Bacon and Sir Edwin Sandys, says that its spirit of freedom was 'much beyond the principles of the age,' and that it failed on that account to be adopted, no trace of it appearing in the journals. But the first paragraph of it is in the journals; and from a debate in the Commons in 1621, I find that it was not only read but adopted, its non-appearance in the journals being at that time a matter of astonishment to the senior members, who had been parties to the adoption of it. Beaumont, the French ambassador, speaks of the king at the time as having addressed the house in a speech 'full of anger,' which, he says, was heard in silence, but followed by 'a justification of themselves in writing against all his imputations.' This reference is clearly to Bacon's paper. There is also a reference to it in the preface to *Truth brought to Light*. The paper may be seen in the *Parliamentary History*, i. 1030-1042. There is a copy also in the State Paper Office, *Domestic Series*, Vol. viii. No. 70. It will be seen that in this document the house condemns the new power just given to the crown in relation to ecclesiastical questions by the council and the judges; and it might be shown that the commons had expressed themselves with the same freedom on the same points in previous sittings.

† Hallam's *Const. Hist.* i. 331, 332.

his hatred of the Puritans. There were dissolute men who shared that feeling with him, but they were with him in scarcely anything beside, and were not men to serve him in his difficulties. Osborne, a contemporary, and no precisionist in any sense, complains of 'the notorious debauchery of the Episcopal clergy;' and informs us, that the term *Puritan* had become a name of reproach which the profligate were pleased to cast on every man pretending to any sort of conscientiousness. 'Under that term,' says our author, 'were comprehended not only those brain-sick fools who oppose 'the discipline' and ceremonies of the Church, and 'make religion an umbrella to impiety, but such as out 'of mere honesty restrained the vices of the times were 'branded with that title. Neither was any being charged 'with it, though of the best relation, thought competent to preferment in church or commonwealth— 'which made the bad glory in their impiety, and such 'as had not an extraordinary measure of grace, ashamed 'of any outward profession of sanctity. Court sermons 'were fraught with bitter invectives against these 'people, whom they seated nearer the confines of hell 'than Papists. To avoid the imputation of Puritanism '—a greater sin than vice in the way of preferment— 'our divines, for the generality, did sacrifice more time 'to Bacchus than to Minerva, and being excellent 'company, drew the most ingenious laity into a like 'excess.'*

In fact, the morals of the country, which had deteriorated considerably under Elizabeth, had become greatly more corrupt under her successor. The king's known feeling towards the Puritans, and his profusion,

CHAP. IV.
State of
society—re-
proach of
Puritanism.

* *Memoirs*, 440-443.

BOOK I. levity, and sensuous habits, had much affected court and country; so that not only the stricter sort of religious people, but, as Osborne has said, any man who from a sense of decency would 'restrain the vices of the times,' had to reckon on being denounced, both in high places and low places, as a precisionist and a hypocrite. One effect of this course of affairs was, that the earnest men of those days often became intensely earnest. To hold their own in such circumstances, it became them to be circumspect, to be armed at all points, and to be men possessing not a little of the martyr spirit. Happily, among the gentry, and still more among the intelligent middle class through town and country, the men of this temperament were not few.

Rise of the
High An-
glican
school of
Church-
men.

With the accession of the House of Stuart came a marked change in the feeling and pretensions of the English clergy. We have seen that in the later years of Elizabeth, the Puritans became more Presbyterian than Episcopal in their views with regard to church polity; and as they professed to derive those views simply from the sacred writings, it was only natural that they should learn to speak of them as resting on authority, not simply human, but divine. The bishops were greatly disturbed by this *jus divinum* claim on the part of their opponents. Nor were they well satisfied, on other grounds, with the position which had been assigned to their order by the state since the Reformation. In the judgment of Henry VIII. and of Elizabeth, bishops were a class of men whose function had proved useful—nothing more. Henry found them in the church, and from expediency, and not as ceding any exclusive sacerdotal power to their office, he was content to retain them. So it was with Elizabeth. When the sceptre

was about to pass from the last of the Tudors to the first of the Stuarts, Bancroft, the bishop of London, ventured to affirm that the function of the bishop was of divine institution. The object of this movement was twofold—to meet the Puritan on his own ground, by opposing one *jus divinum* claim to another; and at the same time to improve the general position of prelacy in its relation to the civil power, by placing the divine right of bishops side by side with the divine right of kings. Henry VIII. recognized no divine right beside his own, and no such dogma was likely to find favour with Elizabeth, who was evidently resolved to be mistress over both church and churchmen. But the scene changed when her successor came to the throne. The maxim of James, ‘No bishop no king,’ of course disposed him to cede almost any authority to the mitre, from a mistaken notion that all such power would be only another form of his own. The policy of James in this respect was that of Charles.

To Charles, no less than to James, the free principles of the Puritans in relation both to ecclesiastical and to political questions, were especially offensive, and this new league between prelacy and the crown was the consequence. Hence the clergy especially opposed to the Puritans under Charles, were a widely different order of men from those who had been about Elizabeth in her early days. The ecclesiastical matters to which the Puritans of that time preferred objection were no longer acknowledged to be really exceptionable. On some ground, real or imaginary, everything of that order was now affirmed to be seemly, beautiful, and even sacred. The mediæval church, in place of being, as in the language of the old bishops, ‘the church of the

BOOK I.

Amalekite,' was described as a church rich in spiritual excellence, from which we had separated ourselves too far, and to which it would be wise in many things to return. Andrews, and Donne, and the school they represented, discoursed often after this manner. Laud, and Montague, and Cosins carried these tastes and maxims from the closet and the court into the business of the church and of the nation. Without being Romanists, the sympathies of these persons were largely with that church, and repugnant to the Protestant cause in Europe. Hence, in the judgment of the Puritans, if these men were not concealed Papists, they were men acting upon a policy the manifest tendencies of which were towards a restoration of that faith. By these high churchmen, the revolt of the reformers against the church of the past was described as fierce, irreverent, excessive, menacing principles which should have been venerated as lying at the foundation of all ecclesiastical and social order. That the Tudors should have regarded the office of the bishop as a merely human institution, was accounted, whenever it became necessary to seem cognizant of the fact, as little less than monstrous. So of much beside. The better men of this school influenced a considerable portion of the laity.* Educated women often received their lessons with the greatest docility. In the manners and visible tastes of this whole party, there was so much which seemed to bespeak a nearer affinity with Romanism than with Protestantism, that the feeling with which the Puritans denounced this apparent disposition to abandon the reformed faith was

* Rushworth, ii. 324, 380, 410. Among these Protestant revilers of the Reformation, an early and conspicuous place must be assigned to Bancroft.

certainly not the sheer bigotry, or baseless panic, it is often said to have been, but was rather a feeling which could not fail to be awakened by such appearances.

CHAP. IV.

Charles was much in the hands of this party when he became king, partly from preference, and partly from the paucity of able men at his disposal. Buckingham had been so much intent upon monopolizing all court influence, that the court party, which might otherwise have given its aid to the sovereign, was much broken and enfeebled. In parliament, this party consisted of persons disposed to support the pretensions of the Crown, and who, in most cases, were content to follow the advice of its ministers. But many of those pretensions had come to be so much questioned, and to be questioned with so much earnestness and ability, that the men who were concerned to sustain them were obliged to prosecute their object with some caution. Attempts, indeed, were made by men who had passed much time at foreign courts, to reconcile their countrymen to the growth of arbitrary government at home, by discoursing about the hard fare and wooden shoes which fell to the lot of its victims abroad. But the reception given to such oratorical displays was of a nature to discourage the exercise of genius after that manner.* The leaders of this party generally pursued a wiser course. They would not be described as the abettors of tyranny in the state, or of superstition in the church. The differences between them and their opponents, they said, were by no means so considerable as seemed to be supposed. In fact, it was a difference more about means than about ends. In all ordinary cases they hoped to see the government conform to the law, and to see all independent action of

The Court party.

* *Parl. Hist.* i. 205.

BOOK I. the crown restricted to those novel and extreme circumstances for which the law may not have made an adequate provision. On the subject of religion, they were as sound Protestants as any portion of the community, though they were certainly disposed to look with some favour on certain ancient usages retained in the national church. The country party listened to all statements of this description with misgiving. They knew that, under the cover of such language, evils which they were intent on bringing to an end were likely to be perpetuated. They knew, moreover, that they were themselves the majority, and they were not slow in attributing this moderated language on the part of their opponents to a remembrance of that unwelcome fact.

Puritans
and Patriots

It is to be observed, however, that while the court party exhibited little perceptible difference of opinion, the country party consisted of two classes, who have become known in our history by the name of Puritans and Patriots. The former class was much the more numerous, but the latter included some of the most distinguished men of the age. The names of Coke and Seldon are sufficient to indicate the order of ability brought by the patriot party to the public cause. Still, it must not be supposed that this party was little concerned about the religion of the country. On that subject, every man was more or less a zealot in those days. The patriot party regarded the safety of the nation as inseparable from the safety of its Protestantism. Concerning some of the obnoxious services in the church they were hardly less decided in their opposition than the Puritans themselves; and they were especially jealous of any encroachment by the clergy on the province of the magistrate. From the age of Charles V.

to the treaty of Westphalia, religion was everywhere the mainspring of politics; and the horror of Popery, which some writers describe as the ridiculous attribute of English Puritanism, was then the feeling of English patriotism, and, in fact, of true Protestantism throughout Christendom. Some men were especially opposed to Romanism as being hostile to civil freedom and to social improvement. But with this class there was another, much more numerous and more energetic, who would have crushed the papal system as a power which invaded the conscience, and destroyed the soul.

In our secular and conventional times, it is not easy to imagine the influences which made the Puritan forms of thought so potent in minds of eminent sagacity. We have the explanation in part, in the fact, that the Bible in the sixteenth century, and through the first half of the seventeenth, was, even to thoughtful men, comparatively a novel book,—a treasure which had been lost and was found. It was to them, moreover, a book, the full inspiration, the unerring truth of which was above suspicion. It was, in the most emphatic sense, the word of God; and its facts and doctrines were taken in their most simple and natural significance. The age was in this respect, and to them especially, an age of faith,—we may say, of child-like and loving faith. Such men as Eliot and Hampden, Cromwell and Vane, believed in God and Christ, in Sin and the Evil One, in Heaven and Hell, as the Bible presents them, and very much as Milton has depicted them. To them, this world was full of spiritual influences, both good and bad—full eminently of God. Where duty called, men of this order could brave all things, and still feel that nothing was hazarded. To them there was no such

The Puritan
and his
Bible.

BOOK I. thing as accident. Small things and great were all in the hands of the Highest. As the leaders felt in these respects, so their followers felt; the feeling, indeed, becoming only the more deep as it descended to the humblest.

Relation of
the Puritan
Bible to
Puritan
Patriotism.

It is easy to see how men living in such relations to a higher world would be inclined to question the pretensions of earthly authorities when regarded as opposing themselves to that Higher Power. Every man who supposes that right is on his side supposes that God is on his side. But the Puritan was satisfied that he had a special warrant to that effect, and he was too much disposed to concern himself with questions affecting the law and government of the Almighty, to be deterred by any superstitious scruple from a free scrutiny of the bases of law and government when merely human. Hence his speculations often darted onward, so as to anticipate some of the most advanced positions of modern thought. ‘Treason,’ said a preacher of this order, when addressing a London congregation—‘treason is not limited to the royal blood, as if he only could be a traitor who plotteth or attempteth the dishonour, or the shedding thereof; but may be, and is too often, committed *against the whole church and nation*: which last is so much the worse of these two, by so much as the end is better than the means, and the whole of greater consequence than any one part.’* Such was the clear and strong grasp of political principle possible to the mind of a Calvinistic lecturer in the early days of Charles I. So spoke Milton and Locke in their season, and so many great men have spoken since. Bound by conscience to resist the pretensions of

* Rushworth, iii. 32, 140-142.

the civil power in regard to religion, it was natural, as this controversy grew upon their hands, that the Puritans should thus extend their inquiries to points affecting the ground of all government.

CHAP. IV.

The reader must not forget that the Puritans, under James and Charles, were not in the position of the modern Nonconformists. They were of the national church, both ministers and laity. There was much in the existing ecclesiastical system which they would have reformed; but their parish churches were their religious home. They had been baptized within those walls. There they had been married. There, or among the tombs adjacent to it, they had buried their dead. There, too, they expected, in their turn, to sleep their own long sleep. Their ministers were all university men. Their laity embraced persons of all ranks. In our memory, the Dissenter has been sometimes described as not more than half an Englishman. In the eyes of some men it has been a presumption in him to seem to regard this great England as his country. But the bitter hate generated, and very naturally generated, by such social disparagement, belongs to comparatively recent times. Of course, the fact that English Puritanism embraced, not only the strong feeling of the middle class, but much of the intelligence and culture of the higher grades of society, contributed largely to make it the power it became in our history.

Social position of the Puritans.

If this glance at the character and position of parties on the accession of Charles I. be remembered, the course of events which followed will be readily understood. The reader has seen that the Puritans at Hampton Court made no assault on the hierarchy. Whatever might be the natural issue of some of their principles,

Uses of this retrospect.

BOOK I. they merely prayed that a few ceremonies which were a burden to their consciences might be dispensed with, and that a few measures tending to the greater usefulness of the church might be adopted. Nor did the Puritans now seek anything more. The country party in Parliament complain heavily of grievances. But their grievances in relation to the church have respect almost wholly to matters of ritual; and in relation to the state, to the alleged violation of laws designed to secure the subject against arbitrary arrests and arbitrary taxation.

Charles's
impolicy—
language of
his friends.

How Charles persisted in the war with Spain, whilst obstinately evading his promise of a redress of grievances as the condition of obtaining the requisite supplies; how, through the influence of Buckingham, he added to the war with Spain a war with France, and thus incurred new disgraces abroad and new difficulties at home; and how, at last, he dismissed his third parliament, four years after his accession, and set himself resolutely to govern without parliaments,—all this is recorded, more or less fully, by our historians. When affairs had come to this issue, there were men, not reckoned with the court party, to whom some of the speeches and some of the proceedings in the lower house seemed to be in a measure wanting in considerateness and moderation. According to these persons, it should have been enough that the king had acknowledged the duties at the ports to be dependent, like all other imposts, on the consent of parliament; and that he had ceded so much in favour of the liberty of the subject as was clearly recognized in the Petition of Right. To attempt to extend their action, as they did, to the punishment of the officers who had done the king's bidding, and to pass beyond this redress of grievances to the impeachment of minis-

ters, was to make a larger demand on the forbearance of the king than could be accounted reasonable. CHAP. IV.

The reader, however, must bear in mind the language in which Charles spoke, once and again, concerning the divine right—the irresponsible power inherent in his kingly office; the distinct and emphatic terms in which he had declared all the privileges of parliament to be matter of royal sufferance; the extent to which he had betrayed these arbitrary tendencies, by attempting to control the discussions of the house, and the conduct of the speaker; the vacillation and weakness of judgment which he had manifested on so many occasions; the ease with which he could descend to any measure of duplicity in the most solemn transactions; and his lamentable want of the manly independence and sagacity necessary to ensure an efficient administration of the weighty affairs which devolved on his government. It is true, the commons had been more conformable to the royal pleasure under Elizabeth; but even then they often evinced a will of their own. Elizabeth, moreover, had never made such demands on the resources of the state as were now made; and had never committed the interests and honour of the country to a man so incompetent and worthless as the duke of Buckingham. Her subjects were confident that her high-souled nature was English to the core. When she knew that she had knaves to deal with, she sometimes paid them in their own coin. But her English people could always rest upon her word. Her sound Protestantism was above suspicion. To waste her treasure was like wasting her blood. To bring any signal disgrace on the English flag would have been to break her heart. Charles was not a man cast in a mould of that high order.

What may
be said for
the Com-
mons from
1625 to
1629.

BOOK I.

The commons of 1629 could not forget the evident reluctance with which the least concession had been made by the king. They remembered the vengeance with which he had visited the men whose popular policy had displeased him; and the pardon and promotions which he had been no less eager to bestow on those divines who by their servile teaching had incurred the displeasure of his subjects. They were too wise also not to see that, having to do, unhappily, with a king who had been found so greatly wanting in sincerity, it became them to insist upon securities which it might not have been reasonable in other circumstances to have demanded. Such is the Nemesis which is sure to follow upon the track of falsehood! And when the king had once declared that the tools used in his oppressions were not to be responsible to the nation, but to himself only, it would have been to betray the national cause not to have insisted on having that question put for ever at rest. It was a grave thing to tell the people of England, that they could have no remedy against oppression except by visiting it with its fitting penalties in the person of the sovereign! But that was the issue of the maxims avowed by the king.

The commons felt the danger of this course, if the monarch did not. It is observable in their discussions in 1629, that with all their excitement, they are especially careful that there should be no want of reverence in their proceedings with regard to the office and character of the king. Their language concerning him is always constitutional. They will not seem to see his personal faults. They fix those faults on other men. The sort of divinity that should be about him as a king they leave untouched. But sparing the king, they dared not

spare his instruments. Clarendon states, that he was well acquainted with the proceedings of the three parliaments assembled in the early days of this monarch, and expresses his wonder at the course taken by the government. 'It is not to be denied,' he writes, 'that there were in all those parliaments, especially in that of the fourth year, several passages and distempered speeches, of particular persons, not fit for the dignity and honour of those places, and unsuitable to the reverence due to his majesty and his councils. But I do not know any formed act of either house (for neither the remonstrance nor votes of the last day were such) that was not agreeable to the wisdom and justice of great courts upon those extraordinary occasions. And whoever considers the acts of power and injustice in the intervals of parliaments, will not be much scandalized at the warmth and vivacity of those meetings.*' These admissions in favour of the popular party are admissions from one of their greatest enemies. In short, to know that this house of commons represented some three-fourths of the wealth of the country, is to feel assured that no great national interest could have been lightly dealt with in that quarter. Had those zealous commoners prayed for the abolition of the court of Star Chamber, as their predecessors in the last reign had prayed for the abolition of the court of High Commission; and had they insisted that the regular convening of parliament should be settled by law, and not left to the pleasure of the government, it would not have been difficult to assign good and consistent reasons for such a policy. But they were not to advance so far until a longer space of misrule had done its office.

* *Hist.* i. 8, 9.

BOOK I.
 Parliaments
 in abeyance
 —arbitrary
 rule.

Through eleven years from this time Charles conformed himself to law, or dispensed with it, according to his humour. The great instruments of his rule were the court of High Commission and the court of the Star Chamber. The one gave him control over the church: the other was so far arbitrary and formidable, that it sufficed to awe the highest subjects of the state into submission. The king continued to levy ship-money in defiance of the decision of the judges, together with a similar tax for the army, under the name of 'coat and conduct money.' Merchandize was made subject to new imposts; chartered monopolies were multiplied almost without end; and loans and other expedients were resorted to, that supplies might be obtained without seeking them from a parliament. To resist, was to be overpowered by the force which the crown could readily exercise. Hence, while men in general accounted themselves grievously oppressed, few dared to be other than passive. The revenue during this interval, from all sources, amounted to about a million a year. The fines imposed in the Star Chamber were sometimes assigned to individuals, but generally passed to the hands of the treasurer, and by their frequency and their weight seemed to warrant the suspicion, that one of the objects of the government in attracting so many causes to that court, which, like the rod of Moses, threatened to swallow up all the rest, was to make it subservient to the necessities of his majesty's exchequer. The great object, however, in giving such prominence to the action of that loose tribunal, was to make the nation familiar with such irregular exercises of authority, until, by the force of usage, the provisions made for the security of liberty

and property by the laws should be overshadowed and superseded. CHAP. IV.

In the system of Church and State present to the imagination of Laud, it seemed to be assumed that the possessors of priestly or monarchical power were vested with a sort of official infallibility. To oppose either of those authorities was to add impiety to rebellion. It was a natural consequence of such principles, that laws which were known to have originated from society should be lightly regarded. What could *their* weight be, in comparison with the decisions of the privileged men to whom society should always be in subjection? The law of the land might have its uses, but when opposed to the will of the king or of the priest it was to give place as to a power whose pretensions were not so much human as divine. Such was the region of illusion in this respect in which the primate lived, that while inflicting the most barbarous penalties on the men who resisted his policy, we find him in his diary imploring the Divine Being to have compassion on the wickedness of the sufferers, and to bestow patience upon himself! His grace had no doubt succeeded in bringing his conscience to the side of his temper. But are we to be for ever censuring a great nation because it would not submit to be governed in its gravest concerns by a man so manifestly incompetent to the sober government of himself?

Laud's theory of Church and State.

Thomas May, the thoughtful historian of the Long Parliament, was a close observer of the feeling and language of men in those days concerning the tendencies of public affairs. He relates that the serious and just men of England, who derived no emolument from the oppressions then so common, could not look to the future without foreboding. Affairs having gone so far

State of public feeling during those years of rule by the royal will.

BOOK I. in a wrong track, either a free nation, it was said, was about to become enslaved in person and property for ever, or a struggle to prevent that calamity would be found to be at hand, the effects of which would be such that all ranks were likely to groan under them.

But there was another sort of men, says the historian especially lords and gentlemen, enjoying their large fortunes with little detriment, who were content not to look beyond the present. It was common with such men to congratulate each other on the undisturbed quiet of the nation, while the states of the Continent, and especially Germany, were so much embroiled in war; and to speak of persons who complained of 'the breach of laws and liberties' as 'ungrateful and factious spirits.' The kingdom, they said, abounds in wealth and luxury such as had never been seen in it before. It was said to be to the honour of the nation that its sovereign should live in splendour, should be little curbed in his prerogative, and be allowed to rise by that means in the esteem of other princes, and to become potent in his negotiations with them. True, there were monopolies, and there was taxation by the will of the king; but how light were our inconveniences from that source, compared with what pressed on the people in Tuscany, Austria, and Spain! The French king, as was well known, had made an end of parliaments, which were once as powerful in that kingdom as among ourselves, and France nevertheless flourished, and her gentry lived at their ease. 'Courtiers,' continues our old English senator, 'began to dispute against parliaments in their ordinary course, and hoped the king would never need any more of them. Some of the gravest statesmen and privy councillors would ordinarily laugh at the ancient

‘language of England, when the words *liberty of the* CHAP. IV.
subject was named.’*

Yes; England, in common with all other countries, has never been without men thus devoid of the capacity, or of the inclination, to look beyond their own little interest to those of the commonwealth—beyond the present to its probable effect on the future. Charles, by so far limiting the exercise of the power he had assumed, and proceeding towards his object, according to the politic advice of Wentworth, by little and little, had secured to himself the benefit of such speeches, and something more, from that class of persons. It is to be remembered, that it was only by exposing themselves to every calumny which such speech-makers could devise, and to all the more active hostility of which their luxurious and short-sighted selfishness was capable, that the men sent to the Long Parliament, in 1641, succeeded in putting an end to the labours of those state artists who would have seen our English government remodelled after the pattern supplied to them by Tuscany and France, by Austria and Spain!

How May’s ‘serious and just men of England’ discoursed on these matters, we may judge from the terms in which Lord Falkland expressed himself concerning the bishops, when the time had come in which it was safe to say in public what had been often said at the fire-side. ‘He is a great stranger in Israel who ‘knows not that this kingdom hath long laboured under ‘many and great oppressions, both in religion and ‘liberty; and his acquaintance here is not great, and ‘his ingenuousness less, who does not both know and ‘acknowledge that a great, if not a principal cause of

* *History of the Parliament*, Book i. c. 2.

BOOK I. ' both these have been some bishops and their adherents.
 ' A little search will find them to have been the des-
 ' truction of unity under the pretence of uniformity,—
 ' to have brought in superstition and scandal under
 ' the name of reverence and decency,—to have defiled
 ' our church by adorning our churches,—to have
 ' slackened the strictness of that union which was
 ' formerly between us and those of our religion beyond
 ' sea,—an action as impolitic as ungodly. It has been
 ' more dangerous for men to go to some neighbouring
 ' parish church, there being no service in their own,
 ' than to be obstinate and perpetual recusants. While
 ' masses have been said in security, a conventicle has
 ' been a crime; and, what is more, the conforming to
 ' ceremonies has been more exacted than the conforming
 ' to Christianity.'*

Confessed
 illegality of
 the course
 pursued by
 King.

It will be seen, that in the talk of the partizans of the court, as given by May, it is not pretended that the law was on the side of the government. In the language of such men, and in that of the king himself, it was confessed, for the most part, that the course taken was 'extraordinary,' and not the ordinary course, as prescribed by our ancient usages and statutes. The straining of isolated, obsolete, and irrelevant precedents, as in the case of ship-money, only served to demonstrate, more clearly than before, that the case of the government on the ground of law was utterly untenable. The arbitrary imposts and the arbitrary arrests were manifestly illegal. The only means of defence left to the royalist was in the plea, that the temper of the lower house, after adequate experiment, had proved to be so perverse and undutiful, as to have forced the king from

* Rushworth, iii. 1342, 1343.

the old paths of the constitution, into those irregular courses which had occasioned so much complaint. The subject had pressed unduly on the action of the prerogative, and the prerogative in its turn had pressed on the liberty of the subject. But the answer made by the friends of those accused parliaments was, that the king had convened them simply because he wanted money; and that making his wants a plea for haste, he would have restricted their functions to little more than the making of such grants.

Early in 1639 Scotland has drawn the sword, that the matters at issue between herself and her sovereign may be brought to some settlement by that means. Charles looks to England, on whose good offices he had so little claim, to assist him in subduing this revolt. England answers—We are prepared to assist your majesty, but it must be on condition that you consent to govern these nations according to the national will, as embodied in our laws.*

His majesty now promised largely in that direction; but he did so by degrees, with manifest reluctance, and in connexion with circumstances which made it only more difficult than ever to confide in his sincerity. The Army plot; the conduct of the king in relation to the massacre in Ireland; the "Incident" in Scotland; and the attempt to seize the five members,—all had combined to foreshadow in the return of power to the monarch, a return of vengeance to the men who had opposed themselves to his policy. Hence, on the principle of self-preservation, the popular leaders were con-

War inevitable—and why.

* Rushworth, ii. 518, *et seq.* *Hardwicke Papers*, ii. 128-130. *Clarendon Papers*, ii. 16-29, 50. *Spalding's Troubles*, 74. *Baillie's Letters*. Vol. I.

BOOK I.

strained to demand concessions which men who had less at issue in the struggle might be led to regard as excessive; and the minds are not few in which sympathy with royalty in distress, and under supposed wrong, is a potent instinct. So it happened, that from the material matters ceded by the king on the one side, and from some intemperate manifestations of popular feeling on the other, the adherents to the royal cause came to be so considerable, as to satisfy Charles that it would be wise to place the entire issue upon the sword. The progress and termination of this conflict will be familiar to the reader. My object will be to trace the course of legislation in regard to religion from 1640 to 1660: first, as proceeding from the Long Parliament, and while mainly under Presbyterian influence; and next, as it was modified or determined by the rise and power of the Independents.

Religious feeling in the Long Parliament.

The Long Parliament assembled on the third of November, in 1640. On the seventh, Pym and sir Benjamin Rudyard addressed the commons on grievances, and denounced in strong terms the Romanizing tendencies observable in the court, and especially among the clergy. Popish ceremonies, it was said, were sure to find favour, while everything which bespoke a sound Protestantism was sure to be discountenanced and suppressed under the name of Puritanism.

Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton released, March 22, 24.

The house passed a resolution which required, that Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton should be set at liberty under its own warrant, and that inquiry should be made concerning the authority on which they had been imprisoned.*

* Rushworth, iv. 43, *et seq.* May's *Hist.* Book 1. c. 7. *Parl. Hist.* ii. 729, 762.

It will be seen, that in this proceeding, the parliament assumed to itself the function of a law court. The commons had asserted an authority of this kind in the last reign, and in the early years of the present. Floyd, Montague, and Mainwaring had all been arraigned as culprits at its bar. With us, happily, parliament has no such power in relation to private persons. But in those days, and especially when parliament was not sitting, the sovereign could so rule, partly through the Star Chamber and the court of High Commission, and partly by controlling the press and the judges, as to neutralize all law; and it was to counteract these irregularities in the absence of a parliament, that the two houses, when in session, became so often aggressive in this manner. One undue stretch of authority had thus generated another. The power of the crown was not then restricted by law as at present; and from that cause the jurisdiction of parliament was not limited then as it is now. Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, had been conspicuous among the victims of the late misrule by priest and king; and now they were not only liberated, but some months later they were compensated for their sufferings, and graced with a popular ovation, which brought all London out in holiday.*

CHAP. IV.

Judicial function assumed by the Commons.

March 22, 1641.

Three weeks after the meeting of parliament we find the commons in committee on religion. Sir Edward Dering denounces the bishops as having long employed

Committee of enquiry concerning oppressed ministers.

* Nothing can be said to justify the language with which these offenders assailed the ruling clergy. According to Burton, who was a man of a more intelligent and tolerant spirit than either of the others, the prelates were 'dumb dogs, antichristian mushrooms, ravening wolves, robbers of souls, factors of antichrist, and limbs of the beast.' Rushworth, iii. App. 122-132. May, 53-55. Baillie, i. 218-227. *Parl. Hist.* ii. 729, 762.

BOOK I. themselves in harassing and expelling conscientious and worthy ministers, and in bestowing their patronage on men who, however scandalous in their lives, were found willing to conform to superstitious novelties. His proposal is, that the house shall appoint a sub-committee of a few persons, and empower them to enquire concerning the number of ministers who have suffered from this policy of the prelates during the last ten years. We shall have more to say about this committee in another place.

Petition
from the
Londoners
against
Episcopacy,
Dec. 11,
1640.

Within a fortnight from this time, we find a petition addressed to parliament from the city of London, which prays, that the government by archbishops and lord-bishops, deans and archdeacons, may be abolished. This petition was presented by Alderman Pennington, accompanied by some hundreds of people, and 15,000 signatures were attached to it. In former times, say the petitioners, the bishops and their coadjutors were content to rule by authority from the state. They now claim to rule by authority from Jesus Christ—an assumption which is not only inconsistent with the state-royal of the sovereign, but has brought upon the subject a multitude of grievances too heavy to be borne. In the petition, these grievances are set forth under nearly thirty distinct sections. The tone and contents of this document were the natural fruit of Episcopal government as it had been influenced by Laud during this reign.*

Commons
deny legis-
lative power
to the
clergy.

Four days later, the commons pronounced their censure on the recent proceedings of the two houses of convocation. The independent and legislative authority assumed by the clergy in those assemblies, was declared,

* Rushworth, iii. 1343-1345, 1346-1363. Baillie's *Letters*, i. 215, 216; see also pp. 225, 228, 236, 239, 242.

without a dissentient voice, to be contrary to law. No part of those proceedings, it was said, should be accounted as binding on either clergy or laity without consent of parliament. The lords concurred to the letter in this decision of the commons. Enquiries were also to be made in respect to the persons who had been most concerned in promoting measures so unwarranted and so dangerous.*

Laud must have seen that this commission of enquiry would press very inconveniently upon himself. But his grace was not allowed space to use much precaution. Only two days more had intervened, when 'William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury,' found himself charged with high treason. This impeachment was taken from the commons to the lords by Mr. Hollis. The primate rose from his seat, and would have spoken, but the house obliged him to be silent, and to recall a rash expression he had uttered in censure of his accusers. So Laud became a prisoner in the Tower. The charges preferred against him were many and various; and they were all urged as evidence of an intention to assimilate the English church, as far as possible, to the church of Rome; and to assimilate the English government, as far as possible, to the governments of France and Spain. Similar proceedings were commenced, and on similar grounds, against Dr. Cosin; against Piers, bishop of Bath and Wells; and against Wren, bishop of Ely.†

But the first measure tending to affect the position of the prelates as an order, was a resolution which declared 'That for bishops, or for any other clergymen, to be in

Laud charged with high treason.

Opposition to the secular functions of the clergy, May 14, Oct. 23, 1541.

* Collier's *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 795, 796. *Parl. Hist.* ii. 678.

† Rushworth, iv. 98, 123, 133, 139, 152, 158. *May's Hist.* 55, 56. Collier's *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 789-799.

BOOK I. 'the commission of the peace, or to have judicial power
 'in any law court, is a hindrance to their spiritual func-
 'tion.' An enactment to this effect, however, was not
 to be readily obtained. The lords were slow to act
 upon a policy which would have excluded the prelates
 from their seats in parliament.*

Bill to
 abolish the
 hierarchy.

But the next step of the popular leaders in this direc-
 tion in the commons was still more bold. It consisted
 in Sir Edward Dering's bill 'for the utter abolishing
 'and taking away of all archbishops, bishops, and of the
 'whole scheme of government depending on them.' This bill, it seems, owed its origin, in great part, if not
 entirely, to 'Sir Arthur Haslerig, Sir Harry Vane, and
 Mr. Oliver Cromwell.' The second reading was carried
 by a division of 139 against 108. But this revolution
 in the ecclesiastical constitution was not to be realized
 until the course of the war had introduced other changes.
 The last debate on this question before the commence-
 ment of hostilities, is said to have extended to nearly
 twenty days. Hyde, Falkland, and others who seceded
 with them soon afterwards to the king, contrived to
 protract the discussion, and to make it fruitless.†

Impeach-
 ment of the
 bishops.

Foiled in this object, the reformers in the commons
 took other ground. They maintained that the bishops
 in convocation had usurped authority pertaining to the
 crown and the legislature; that they were liable to
 impeachment on that ground; and they impeached them
 accordingly. But the issue thus raised was not to be
 brought to a speedy conclusion. Six months later, the
 bishops complained that the disorders of the populace
 made their access to parliament dangerous; and their

* Collier's *Eccles. Hist.* 792, 916.

† *Parl. Hist.* ii. 814, 822. Clarendon, *Hist.* i. 483, 484.

lordships protested against any business being done until measures should be taken to allow of their returning to their place in the house without fear. This attempt to stay the course of legislation was construed by the commons as amounting to high treason. Men who had pleaded in favour of the bishops hitherto, had no word to offer in extenuation of their folly in this proceeding. Twelve prelates remained under the charge of treason on this account, while the more stirring events which brought on the war absorbed the attention of both houses. Two months before the battle of Edge Hill, the English parliament informed their brethren in Scotland that they had resolved, that the prelatical government, which had hitherto obtained in this country, inas-much as 'it has been found by long experience to be a
June 11.
' great impediment to the perfect reformation and growth
' of religion, and very prejudicial to the state and go-
' vernment of this kingdom,' shall be taken away.*

Two months after its first meeting, the parliament had issued an injunction, requiring that the order of Divine service should continue to be such as had been enjoined by parliament. Ten months subsequently, the commons would not join the lords in issuing that injunction anew, but sent forth its first instructions for a reform in the established worship. It was required that the communion table should be removed from the east end of the church, and used elsewhere, not 'altarwise,' but as a table; that all crucifixes, representations of the Trinity, or of the Virgin, should be removed, and all scandalous pictures; that tapers and candlesticks should be no more seen on the communion table; that Sabbath sports should be suppressed; that afternoon preaching should not be

CHAP. IV.
The Com-
mons begin
their re-
forms in
public wor-
ship.

* *Parl. Hist.* ii. 822.

BOOK I.

discountenanced, but the contrary; and that parishes through England and Wales should be encouraged to choose, and to sustain by their voluntary contributions, a lecturer who should preach on the Lord's-day, and once in the week where there is no weekly lecture. But there were limits to this spirit of innovation. A question whether some change should not be made in respect to the use of the Book of Common Prayer, was decided in the negative. But it was in a thin House. The numbers were fifty-five against thirty-seven. We find also, that about London, many laymen had begun to preach, to the great scandal of the lower house, who summoned an exciseman, a stocking-seller, a horse-courser, and some others, to its bar, as offenders in this matter, and admonished them to abstain from such exercises, if they did not mean to expose themselves to serious penalties.

The Assembly of Divines.

So far the work of reformation had extended, when a bill was sent up to the lords, intitled 'An Act for calling an Assembly of godly and learned Divines, to be consulted with by the Parliament, for settling the Government and Liturgy of the church of England; and for vindicating and clearing the doctrine thereof from false aspersions and interpretations.' This assembly included ten delegates from the upper house, and twenty from the lower. The divines, all nominated and chosen by the two houses, were selected from different parts of England, and from both universities; and while the great majority were known to be Presbyterian in their preferences, it was the intention of the parliament, that the Episcopalians on the one hand, and the Independents on the other, should not be without their representatives. Usher, Hall, and London were the men chosen from among the bishops,

and some five or six were Congregationalists—a section which rose ultimately to about double that number. Among the statesmen in the assembly, there was a considerable variety of opinion, but the prevailing element was a strong Erastianism. The Episcopalians took little part in the proceedings. It was otherwise with the Independents. The function of the assembly was carefully defined. Its province was simply to deliberate and advise, and its opinion or advice was to be tendered on such subjects only as should be submitted to its judgment by the parliament. All legislative power, which had been so emphatically denied to the clergy and convocation, was denied with no less emphasis to this more favoured body.*

The assembly met on the 1st of July, 1643, and all ministers in their public prayers were required to supplicate, that ‘the special assistance and blessing of God’ might be extended to it. One of the first acts of the divines was to petition the two houses, deploring the reverses which had attended the arms of the parliament; the superstition and licentiousness so common among the people; and the number of scandalous ministers. The divines pray that a fast-day may be appointed to implore that the Divine anger might be turned from the nation, and that such reforms might be devised and carried out as should tend to suppress the abounding immorality, and to revive true religion.

* Dr. Heylin, Clarendon, and writers of their class, say disparaging and slanderous things of this assembly. Baxter says, ‘Being not worthy to be one of them myself, I may the more freely speak the truth, even in the face of malice and envy—that, as far as I am able to judge from all history of that kind, the Christian world since the days of the apostles had never a synod of more excellent divines than this and the synod of Dort.’ *Life and Times*, Part i. 73.

BOOK I.

The hierarchy to be abolished—the new directory.

The parliament appointed the fast-day; and three months later, the lords and commons order ‘that the assembly of divines, and others, do forthwith confer and treat among themselves of such a discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God’s holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home, and nearer agreement with the church of Scotland, and other reformed churches abroad; to be settled in this church, instead of the present government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissaries, deans, chapters, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical officers, depending upon the hierarchy, which it is resolved shall be taken away; and touching a directory of worship or liturgy hereafter to be in the church, and to deliver their opinion and advices touching the same to parliament, with all convenient speed.’*

Scotch alliance—the League and Covenant.

This purpose to bring the church of England into nearer agreement with the church of Scotland and other reformed churches, was sure to be formed, but it had become more fixed at this juncture from circumstances and necessity. The prospects of the war had excited apprehension. Assistance from Scotland seemed to be indispensable. But the adoption of a policy of this nature was an unavoidable condition of securing aid from that quarter. The action at Brentford had led to a conference on this subject with the Scottish commissioners in London. As the difficulties of the parliament increased, more definite overtures were made; and a deputation, consisting of four members of the commons, and two divines—a Presbyterian and an Independent—was sent to the estates and kirk of

* Husband’s *Collection*, 208-210.

Scotland to negotiate on this subject. In the commencement, the pretensions of the Scots were such as the deputation was by no means prepared to admit. 'The English,' says Baillie, 'were for a civil league; we for a religious covenant. When they were brought to in this, and Mr. Henderson had given them a draft of a covenant, we were not likely to agree on the frame; they were, more than we could assent to, for keeping a door open in England to Independency. Against this we were peremptory.* Sir Harry Vane and Philip Nye, the Independent deputies, exercised their ingenuity and perseverance on this point, and, after much manœuvring, succeeded in introducing such expressions into the document as might seem to grant what the covenanters demanded, but which, at the convenient season, might be interpreted with considerable latitude. It was provided that the church of England should be reformed 'according to the word of God, and according to the example of the best reformed churches.' The Presbyterians would appeal with confidence to what must have been intended by the expression, the 'best reformed churches.' The Independents, on the other hand, would appeal no less confidently to the rule recognized in the expression, 'according to the word of God.' †

* *Letters*, i. 381.

† Echard's *History of England*, ii. 450. Burnet's *Hamiltons*, 239. Forster's *Life of Vane*, 62. 'When all are agreed,' said Vane, 'about the polity which is "according to the word of God," we may take in the Scotch Presbytery.' Dr. Owen speaks in very strong terms on this point, and we must suppose him to express what was the understanding of many at the time. 'Now truly, that our covenant did tie us up absolutely to any one formerly known way of church discipline—the words of it formally engaging us to a disquisition, *out of the word*, of that which is agreeable to the mind and will of God—is to

BOOK I.
The Cove-
nant mo-
dified by
the West-
minster As-
sembly.

When this memorable instrument came into the hands of the Westminster Assembly, 'the Synod,' says Baxter, 'stumbled at some things in it, and especially at 'the word *prelacy*. Dr. Burgess, the prolocutor, Mr. Gataker, and abundance more, declared their judgment 'to be for Episcopacy, for the ancient moderate Episcopacy, in which the one stated precedent with his 'presbytery governed every church, though not for the 'English diocesan frame, in which one bishop, without 'his presbytery, did, by a lay chancellor's court, govern 'all the presbyters and churches of a diocese, being 'many hundreds. Thereupon grew great debates in 'the assembly, some being against every degree of 'bishops—especially the Scottish divines—and others 'being for a moderate Episcopacy. But these English 'divines would not subscribe the government till there 'was an alteration suited to their judgement, and so a 'parenthesis was yielded to as describing that sort of 'prelacy which they opposed: viz., church government 'by archbishops, bishops, deans, chapters, archdeacons, 'and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that 'hierarchy, all which conjoined are mentioned as the 'description of the form of church government which 'they meant by prelacy, as not extending to the ancient 'Episcopacy. When the covenant was agreed on, the 'lords and commons first took it themselves; and Mr. Thomas Coleman preached to the house of lords, and 'gave it to them with this public explication—*That by* 'me such a childish, ridiculous, selfish conceit, as I believe no knowing 'men will once entertain, unless prejudice, begotten by their peculiar 'self-interest, hath disturbed their intellectuals.' *Short Defensative about Toleration, &c., Works*, viii. 46. It is to be observed that Owen speaks of '*our covenant*,' clearly distinguishing it from some other, viz., the Scotch.

‘prelacy we mean not all Episcopacy, but only the form CHAP. IV.
‘which is here described.’* In this manner the antagonism of the covenant to Episcopacy was in some degree neutralized, and we shall presently see how it became modified in its relation to Independency, and was at length superseded by it.

The act which required that the Book of Common Prayer should be no more used in public worship, and that the minister should conduct such service in future according to the Directory provided by the Assembly of Divines, did not pass until some two years after the commencement of the war. This Directory consists of judicious and scriptural counsels relating to the manner and order in which the minister should acquit himself in his offices. It does not in any case prescribe the exact words he should employ. But it gives directions as to congregational psalmody, reading the canonical scriptures, extempore prayer, preaching, the administration of the sacraments, visiting the sick, the burial of the dead, and the ceremony of marriage. It leaves all these services to be discharged very much in the manner now common among English Nonconformists. Water baptism is interpreted as the sign of regeneration, but it does not ensure it, and salvation does not depend on it. In the Lord’s supper, the elements are simply the signs of a spiritual presence. In the

The Directory for Worship, Aug. 1645.

* *Life and Times*, 48. It was agreed in the assembly, after a long discussion, that each man, in accepting the covenant, should do so in these words: ‘As far as in my conscience I shall conceive it to be according to the word of God.’ Lightfoot, who reports this (*Works*, xiii. 10), also mentions the discussion on the word ‘prelacy,’ and the introduction of the explanatory clause, as stated by Baxter, adding, that the advice of the assembly to the parliament was, that ‘in point of conscience the covenant may lawfully be taken, *with these explanations.*’ *Ibid.* 11.

BOOK I. visitation of the sick there is no priestly absolution. In the burial of the dead, all ceremony at the grave, or in passing to it, is dispensed with—the prevalent customs on such occasions being accounted useless to the dead, and misleading to the living. The marriage relation is viewed as a civil contract, but it is held fitting that the ceremony connected with it should be performed by a minister. In short, the book consists of such suggestions as age and piety might be expected to place before the inexperienced in any sound Protestant community. Compared with the ritual which it was to supersede, it was eminently scriptural, and considerate of religious scruples. To the conscience of the earnest Protestant it should have been singularly harmless.*

But the act did not fix the day when the Directory should come into use, nor the penalty for neglecting to use it. Hence, more than six months passed away, and the worship in many parishes continued unchanged. But it was then determined, that the copies of the Book of Common Prayer in the churches should be surrendered to the officers of the government, and that not to use the Directory in public worship should subject the offender, in the first instance, to a fine of five pounds, in the second instance, to a fine of ten pounds, and for a third fault of this nature, the punishment was made to be a year's imprisonment.†

Fall of the
hierarchy.

In the following year the parliament formally abolished the hierarchy, and consigned the property belonging to the several bishoprics to the hands of trustees for national purposes, excepting such portions of it as had been left to educational or charitable objects, or to a particular

* Scobel's *Acts*, 75-92.

† Husband's *Collection*, 715, 716. This act was generally enforced, but not without some exception.

class of pious uses. A few months later, the Presbyterian party in the lower house succeeded in giving to their ecclesiastical system a legal and full establishment.* CHAP. IV.
The fall of a church which had survived the revolutions of a thousand years was a great event—some will say a sad event. But the impartial man will not forget the temper and tendencies by which that imposing system had been long characterized, and will feel, that if the cost of perpetuating so seemly a fabric was to perpetuate so much error and misrule, the sooner it came to an end the better. The purest form of taste is not that which terminates in the artificial and external. It finds the highest grandeur in the spiritually true, and the richest form of the beautiful in the spiritually good. The day of adversity had now come on the courtier priest, and on those who had chosen their place in his following; and as the sequestered clergy were many, we can easily suppose that some among them had a right to complain of harshness and wrong.

But it is important to distinguish between the real and the fictitious in relation to the experiences of the episcopal clergy between 1640 and 1660. Much has been written of this subject which is not true; much has been disfigured by exaggeration; and some of the things pronounced as so much grievous wrong should hardly have been so described.† It is a great mistake, for example,

Proceedings
against the
Episcopal
clergy.

* Scobel's *Acts*, 88, 99, 111, 114, 139, 164.

† The great authority with our friends of the church of England on this subject, is the work of Dr. Walker, intitled—*An Attempt towards Recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy*, &c. The doctor writes in the time of Queen Anne; and the following portraiture of the liberal party of that time, may be taken as a specimen of his moderation and good taste: 'But this is not to be wondered at [designs against the person and government of the

BOOK I.

to imagine that injury was done to the sequestered clergy in their not being allowed to meet their accusers face to face. Questions concerning clerical character and church livings belong to the court of Arches, where the course of proceeding was, and still is, by what is technically called *libel* and *affidavit*—that is, by a written statement of the charge, and written depositions in support of it. The charge, which has been presented in writing, and the written affidavits annexed to it, are placed in the hands of the defendant; and it rests with him to present his own statement, and his own affidavits, in reply, and then to leave the court to judge on the points at issue. It is true, the case of the royalist clergy was not taken before an ecclesiastical court, but before a parliamentary committee. But this happened because the old ecclesiastical courts had ceased to exist, virtually if not formally, and it was only natural that the authority which had come into the place of those courts should conform itself in the

‘queen] because of the near affinity betwixt blaspheming God and
 ‘the king, for it is well known that the sacred Majesty of Heaven has
 ‘not escaped them, and that they have taken into their assistance the
 ‘most exploded heretics, and lewdest and most profligate libertines, and
 ‘the vilest and most open atheists and blasphemers; not only making use
 ‘of their attempts on the established hierarchy, and clergy of it, and
 ‘even Christianity itself, in order to shake the pillars of the church,
 ‘but licking up their venomous froth, and spitting it out at second-hand
 ‘against her, and defending the purity of religion forsooth, with
 ‘principles borrowed from libertines and infidels. In a word, applaud-
 ‘ing, encouraging, hiring them to tear up the very foundations, not of
 ‘Christianity only, but of all religion and government, that the estab-
 ‘lished church and monarchy may fall with them; and in many years
 ‘last past, entrusting the conduct of their affairs to such leaders as are
 ‘the avowed and professed enemies of the blessed Jesus.’ *Preface*, x.
 The reader may judge from this passage, as to the dispassionate and safe
 guidance which Dr. Walker is likely to furnish on so difficult and delicate
 a question as the ‘number and sufferings’ of the sequestered clergy.

main to their established mode of proceeding. It is only very recently that oral depositions have been admissible even in the Court of Chancery. Some of the accused clergy did reply to their opponents in the manner open to them, and with more or less success. But the great majority seem to have allowed judgment to go by default. We repeat, there may have been instances of hardship, but that the cases were decided after this manner was no hardship.

The proceedings of the commons in relation to the clergy, began in a committee of the whole house, a few days after the meeting of parliament. But the great work of excluding immoral and obnoxious incumbents from their cures, and of appointing men deemed more eligible in their place, was devolved on a central committee in London, and on sub-committees in different counties. The committee in London consisted of somewhat more than sixty members of the lower house. What the business was which passed into the hands of the county committees may be learned in part from what we know concerning the early proceedings of the committee for the county of Kent.*

Committees
and the
clergy.

The papers sent to that committee in 1640 show that the book enjoining Sunday sports was used by Laud, and by his instruments, for the purpose of sifting the Puritans, as far as possible, out of the church. The lawfulness of the Book of Sports; the right of the pre-

Persecution
of the Puri-
tan minis-
ters.

* *Proceedings, principally in the County of Kent, in connexion with the Parliaments called in 1640, and especially with the Committee of Religion appointed in that Year.* Edited by the Rev. Labert B. Barking, M.A., from the collections of Sir Edward Dering, Bart., 1627-1644; with a Preface by Edward Bruce, Esq., Camden Society. Sir Edward was member for the County of Kent, and chairman of the committee for that county.

BOOK I. lates to impose the new ceremonies ; and the propriety especially of bowing towards the altar, were among the things to which the assent of the man who would be presented to a bishop for ordination was demanded.* In 1634, the chancellor of the diocese of Winchester suspended the vicar of Ebbesham, in Surrey, from office and benefice, for not reading the Book of Sports in the church. When questioned concerning his authority for so doing, the chancellor rested the proceeding on the command of his bishop, and on the civil and canon law.† The bishop's command affected other victims, who were subjected to the same penalty for the same cause.

Laud, addressing himself to a clergyman named Snelling, said, 'Are you conformable?' Snelling answered, 'Yes, as far as it is established by law.' The primate rejoined, 'Are you conformable to the new conformity?' and turning to the company, his grace remarked, 'There is no believing this kind of men.' 'No,' added bishop Wren, 'you may know him by his band, that he has a wonderfully tender conscience.' Soon afterwards, Basil Wood, doctor of laws, and chancellor of Rochester, confesses he did, as alleged, suspend Mr. Snelling *ab officio et beneficio*, for not reading the Book of Sports. Being required to state his authority for such a proceeding, the chancellor of Rochester also named the command of a bishop and the canon law—that law being still law where not positively repealed by our statute law. It was enquired, 'Do you mean the papal canon law?' 'Yes,' was the answer, 'the papal canon law.'‡ In all similar cases this was the answer. One of the sufferers from this policy writes : 'I have had very ungracious dealing from the Lambeth patriarch, by whom I have

* *Proceedings in Kent*, 87, 88.

† *Ibid.* 90.

‡ *Ibid.* 93.

‘ been deprived of my ministry, and all the profits of
‘ my living, three years and seven months, having
‘ myself, my wife, and seven children to provide for.
‘ Such is a prelate’s tyranny for not consenting to morrice
‘ dancing on the Lord’s day!’* The vicar of Tun-
bridge was a person not troubled with such scruples.
‘ So far was he from restraining others from using sports
‘ on the Lord’s day, he himself, it is said, will stand at
‘ his door, and see their sports, and laugh at them.’ But
the vicar, unhappily, like too many of his class, was
‘ a man of profane life, and a common frequenter of
‘ taverns and alehouses.’† Another clergyman informs
us, that he went to evening prayers with a high church
doctor, ‘ behaved himself reverently, but was suspended
for not bowing at the name of Jesus.’‡

CHAP. IV.

Complaints in reference to this zeal in favour of new ceremonies, especially as shown in removing the communion table to the chancel, and using it in altar fashion, are coupled in almost every case with complaints as to a neglect of preaching. A superstitious estimate of certain ritual forms borrowed from Romanism, and a contempt of preaching, went manifestly together. The cases are shown to have been many, in which a short discourse on Sunday morning was all the people could obtain. Often a sermon once in several weeks, once a month, or even less frequently, was made to suffice. Our incumbents, say the people, take their income, but leave their duty to be discharged by men who undertake it for a miserable stipend, and are often grossly incompetent and worthless. We have good reason to think, that in a large proportion of cases these complaints were well founded.

The Anglo-catholic clergy neglect and disparage preaching.

* *Proceedings in Kent*, 120.

† *Ibid.* 193.

‡ *Ibid.* 82.

BOOK I.

Social position of our parochial clergy in the 17th century.

In fact, no comparison can be made between the parochial clergy of England in the middle of the seventeenth century and the same class of men in the middle of the nineteenth. Among the dignitaries of the English church there were men, as there have always been, who were scholars and gentlemen. But such men were exceptions. In the ranks below these, constituting the bulk of their order, poverty was allied with coarseness, sensuousness, and vice, in a degree hardly credible in our time.* The severe self-discipline, and the pride of consistency, which characterized the Puritan minister, tended to secure, in his case, a freedom from debt, and something more than the ordinary regard to appearances. But men who took orders in that age with little sense of religion, often lived with a very limited sense of decency. When not a living in a score would enable a man to appear as a gentleman, even while single, or could suffice to save his home from exhibiting all the signs of a low poverty when married, it was inevitable that the manners and morals of a large portion of the order should be of no very refined description. In our time, a clergyman who is poor may marry into a family of reputation and means. But nothing of that sort could be reckoned

* Wren, bishop of Norwich, in defending himself against the charge of having suspended some sixty clergymen in little more than two years, alleged that many had not been so dealt with on account of Nonconformity, but for other reasons. One, his lordship describes as having been a tailor, another a weaver, another a broken-down tradesman, another a country apothecary, &c. One vicar had not been seen on his cure for seventeen years; and one incumbent had received the income from his charge the last twenty years, and had never taken orders; and the names of *fourteen* clergymen are given as those of men who were expelled on the ground of 'their debauched and scandalous courses.' *Penetralia; or Memoirs of the Family of the Wrens*, 48.

upon in the days of Charles I. Such marriages took place occasionally half a century later, and were then wondered at. It should not occasion surprise, therefore, if we find clerical delinquency two hundred years since to have been very different from anything with which we are ourselves generally familiar.*

* Macaulay's *History of England*, i. 326-329. In Dr. Williams's Library in Redcross-street, there is a paper intitled '*Lamentable Estate of the Ministers in Staffordshire.*' It is without date, but may be assigned to some time within the latter half of the reign of Elizabeth. It presents a complete list of the parishes in Staffordshire, with the names and characters of the clergymen occupying them. The summary of the document is, that 'there be 118 congregations which have no preacher, neither have had (for the most) now more than forty years; there be eighteen congregations served by laymen; by scandalous, forty.' The description of the scandalous class is quite to the effect of the account in the Kent register. So it was, no doubt, over England. In the same collection there is another paper with the title, *View of the State of the Churches in Cornwall.* In this account, which has all the appearance of a report prepared under official direction, a favourable account of a clergyman's character is the exception: as a rule, they are described as debauched, drunken, profane, gamblers, and the like. With this manuscript is another, consisting of a petition from the people of Cornwall to the parliament 'gathered together by the queen's majesty's appointment,' &c., in which the petitioners say, 'We have about eight score churches, the greatest part of which is supplied by men who, through their ignorance and negligence, are guilty of the sin of sins—soul murder.' Then follows the mention of the same string of vices. Some are 'drunkards, some quarrellers, some spotted with whoredom, and some with more loathsome and abominable crimes than those.' Documents of this nature were sent to the privy council from various counties in England, in 1584, and in 1586. According to Neal (cc. vii. viii.), the effect of these representations was to show, that nearly thirty years after the accession of Elizabeth, there were not more than about 2,000 preachers to nearly 10,000 parishes. We have no reason to suppose that the state of things in this respect was at all improved under James, and little, if at all, under Charles. The truth is, these princes all looked on popular preaching with apprehension, and discountenanced it. Two or three preachers for a county,

BOOK I.

Cases of
immorality
before
Sir Edward
Dering's
Committee.

The majority of the clergy against whom complaints were made before Sir Edward Dering's committee, were not accused of immorality. Full half of the cases have respect to false doctrine, to the use of novel ceremonies, to the neglect of duty, or to a manifest disposition to serve the cause of the king, and to injure the cause of the parliament. But the alleged cases of immorality are only too numerous, and some of them were of a revolting description. In two instances only do they appear to have been disproved.

One in the series of offenders pleads thus—‘*Humanum est errore*; pardon human frailties and personal infirmities, and where proofs against me are not certain, I pray judge charitably. I can excuse myself *in tanto*, though *non in toto*.’* The rector of Little Chart has not performed service in that parish six times in three years, ‘in which time the cure has been divers times unserved, and sometimes discharged by drunken ministers.’† This is attested by the churchwardens and others. John Terry, curate of Smarden, ‘hath been negligent in his calling, so that when the congregation has come together on the Lord’s day, he has been absent, no one knowing where. When a corpse has been to be buried he has been so distempered with beer, that he could not read the service. He doth often frequent blind and unlicensed alehouses, wherein he hath been so overtaken in the said vice, that he hath been found lying in the street and dirt, not able to help himself; but two men have led him to his house.

said Elizabeth, is enough; let the rest read the homilies. The effect is seen, not only in the spiritual destitution among the people, but in the character of the clergy.

* *Proceedings in Kent*, 111.

† *Ibid.* 113.

‘ The said Mr. Terry is a fighter, and that not only in
‘ his own house (*nocens plus exemplo quam peccato*), but a
‘ breaker of the king’s peace in striking others, both
‘ men and women, and that even at the church door.
‘ All which we can prove by oath, by witnesses of credit
‘ in our parish.’ This statement is attested by more
than fifty names. Redress, it is said, had been sought
more than once from the court of Canterbury, but
without effect.* One clergyman is described as so ill
paid by the lay impropiator of his cure, that ‘ choosing
‘ rather to steal meat for himself and his, than to beg or
‘ starve, he had been arraigned and condemned of
‘ felony.’ †

Edward Barbet, vicar of Chistlet, is reported by five-
and-thirty persons, including the parish officers, as a
man who, ‘ having by riotous living consumed the greater
‘ part of his estate, lay in prison by the space of half a
‘ year and more ; and having made composition with his
‘ creditors betook himself to the ministry, and was pre-
‘ sented by the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury to the
‘ vicarage of Chistlet aforesaid, being in his gift.’
Barbet’s manner of performing the offices of the
church is described as intolerable—‘ And touching his
‘ life and conversation, it is well known that he is a
‘ common liar, a notorious swearer, a foul, obscene, and
‘ bawdy speaker of ribaldry, uttering sometimes such
‘ words as are not to be spoken by any modest man, nor
‘ to be heard by any Christian ears. And he is also of
‘ an incontinent life, and hath affirmed that marriage is a
‘ superficial ceremony—that it is but the mumbling of a
‘ priest.’ All this these persons say they are prepared
to prove against his grace’s *protégé*, by sufficient wit-

* *Proceedings in Kent*, 115, 116.

† *Ibid.* 151.

BOOK I. nesses.* Twenty persons from the parish of Stourmouth allege that Robert Carter, their rector, 'is a 'common haunter of taverns and alehouses, and a 'great gamester, staying there drinking and gaming, 'sometimes three and sometimes four whole days and 'nights together.'† Robert Barrell, perpetual curate of Maidstone, is also described by more than fifty of his congregation, all of whom can write their names, as 'a 'common tavern haunter. He hath had,' say his discontented flock, 'many curates under him, most of them 'being pot companions, of a very scandalous and evil 'life, one of them leaving a bastard child behind him in 'our town, and others of them gamesters; many of 'them cousining and defrauding poor tradesmen, by 'getting goods into their hands, and then running away.' Barrell himself, it is added, had been indicted for perjury.‡ Thomas Higginson, vicar of Rolvenden, is declared by various witnesses to be habitually profane, drunken, and debauched.§

Sum of the
evidence
from Sir
Edward
Dering's
Committee.

In glancing at the contents of these documents it must be remembered that they relate to the county of Kent, the most civilized county in England; and that the state of things described must have existed while Laud, our 'English Cyprian,' was in the see of Canterbury. Nor is it to be supposed that these revelations included all of the kind that might have been made. They consist of cases which came up in less than a year from the first sitting of the committee. In many parishes, where there may have been abundant reason for com-

* *Proceedings in Kent*, 176, 178. † *Ibid.* 196. ‡ *Ibid.* 202-204.

§ *Ibid.* 236-239. No one denies that many frivolous charges were preferred against obnoxious clergymen; but the question is, were any deprived on the ground of such charges? Accusers, too, may have been influenced, but the influence was not all on one side.

plaint the royalist influence would suffice for a while to ensure quiet. Sir Edward Dering, too, though he entered on his career as a church reformer with a great appearance of zeal, soon began to indulge second thoughts, and to retrace his steps. On the whole, when we look from the signs of clerical infirmity which existed in Kent in 1640, to the fifty-two counties in England and Wales, we feel assured that the number of ecclesiastical persons who deserved to be sequestered on purely moral grounds must have been great. We may safely conclude that more than half the entire number displaced by the Long Parliament were displaced for such reasons, leaving the remainder to consist of the incompetent, of the disaffected, and of those who fled from their cures without waiting for any process of expulsion.*

The publication known by the name of *The First Century of Scandalous Ministers* contained disclosures of so foul a nature, that the most unscrupulous efforts were made, and are still made, to heap infamy upon its author. White was a barrister, and had he been the man his enemies would make him, the most wealthy and influential House of Commons England had ever seen, would hardly have placed him in the chair, when going

White's
Century of
Scandalous
Ministers.

* Baxter, referring to the proceedings of these committees, says, 'I know that there are men in the world that would make us believe that almost none but worthy and learned men were turned out, and that for their fidelity to the king and the bishops. But this age has taught the world how little the report of such men is to be believed. I must needs say, that in all the countries where I was acquainted, six to one at least (if not many more) that were sequestered by the committee were by the oaths of witnesses proved insufficient, or scandalous, or both; especially guilty of drunkenness and swearing; and those that, being able, godly preachers, were cast out for the war alone, or for their opinions' sake, were comparatively *very few*. 'This I know will displease the party, but it is true.' *Life*, 72-74.

BOOK I. into committee on the grave subject of religion. It may be that in some instances the charges preferred were exaggerations, or even falsehoods, but the impeachment, in its great substance, has never been disturbed by any counter evidence. A great cry was raised against what was done. The account published by White was a form of self-defence, which was natural in such circumstances.*

How
Charles in-
fluenced the
conscience
of the clergy

Charles took much pains to stimulate the conscience of his adherents in the course which he must have known would be very costly to them. According to the usage of that age, the ordinances of the government were not only to be placed on the church doors, but were to be read by the clergyman from the pulpit on the Lord's day. The king enjoined that the papers issued by himself should be so read, but expressly forbade the

* On both sides, where the military were ascendant, the clergy were great sufferers from the license of the times. Many of the royalist clergy fled to the king's quarters; and so many of the Puritan clergy, after being pillaged and maltreated by the cavaliers and their followers, fled to London, that a committee was formed, called 'the Committee for Plundered Ministers,' to see that some restitution should be made to that class of persons, and many received some compensation in being appointed to the livings which had become vacant in other places. In the State Paper Office there are two folio volumes, containing a record of what was done by this committee from November, 1645, to April, 1653. The entries consist of resolutions assigning sums of money from 10*l.* a year to 50*l.*, never more, from a number of sequestered livings, in aid of poor livings elsewhere, most of which, from being so poor, were ill-served. What was done in this way appears to have been wisely done. The name of the chairman for the day is affixed to each resolution. The name occurring much the most frequently is the well-known and honourable name of Sir Harbottle Grimstone. MSS. State Paper Office.—*Interregnum. Domestic Series.* Nos. 286, 287. I find, on March 3, 1646, the sums of 8*l.* and 20*l.* voted from certain tithes to the ex-bishop of Carlisle.

reading of those issued by his opponents. As those papers were generally of the nature of attack and rejoinder, to obey the sovereign in this particular became an open proclamation of hostility to the parliament. When the League and Covenant was adopted, Charles made resistance to it a test of loyalty. So when the Directory was issued, the same course was pursued. The use of it was prohibited with all the weight of the royal authority.

CHAP. IV

But inasmuch as his majesty and the parliament had placed their differences on the issue of the sword, it was natural that each party should claim to be the state whenever its power happened to be ascendant, and that it should demand obedience in such quarters from clergy and laity. Hence, while to ignore the Ordinances of the parliament, to reject the League and Covenant, and to persist in using the Prayer Book after the appearance of the Directory, might be applauded as loyalty in Oxford, it was not less natural that such conduct should be construed as little short of treason at Westminster. Everywhere, the ministers of religion had to choose their side on these questions, and to take the consequences. Both parties knew that sequestration, plunder, and outrage, were among the probable consequences of fidelity to conscience, and for a while those penalties fell alike on both. If the Puritan clergy suffered least, it was simply from the fact that Puritanism became the winning cause. The condition of protection from any government, consists in obedience on the part of the governed. The parliament said, in effect, to the royalist clergy, ' Promise us that you will not use the influence of your position to subvert our power, and we promise to secure you in possession of your office and emolument. Reject this

Position assumed towards the country by the King and the Parliament.

BOOK I. 'demand, and the law of self-preservation will dictate
 ' that we should adopt our own means to render your
 ' disaffection harmless.'*

Conformity
 of Episcopa-
 lian clergy-
 men.

Many of the royalist clergy fled voluntarily to the king's quarters. But the great majority complied with the terms proposed to them, being aware, we may suppose, that in adopting the Covenant they were not required absolutely to renounce Episcopacy; and that in consenting to use the Directory, they were not obliged to avow any altered feeling in regard to the book of Common Prayer. The grand test, however, was the Covenant. Persons who had adopted that might accept the Directory with little difficulty. The sequestrations, accordingly, between 1640 and 1660, belong for much the greater part to the years 1643 and 1644, when the Covenant was generally enforced.

Men who
 became
 conscien-
 tious Non-
 conformists.

But here it must be remembered, that while many Episcopalians could readily give the loose and general assent to the Covenant, and to the use of the Directory, which was demanded of them, there were men possessed with a more refined or scrupulous sense of truthfulness and honour, to whom such a course was not possible. Such men became deliberately Nonconformists, and

* The following is one of the articles of impeachment preferred against a clergyman in Kent by sixteen of his parishioners:—'He hath
 ' long continued, in the pulpit, to utter his bitter execrations against
 ' the Scottish nation, and hath often done it since the high court of
 ' parliament assembled, viz., calling them daring rebels, whose faith is
 ' faction, whose truth is treason, whose religion is nothing but rebellion,
 ' that seek to invade this kingdom.' Praying—'Let them be as a
 ' wheel, oh God, and as the stubble before the wind, and let the angel
 ' of the Lord scatter them; let them be as Oreb and Seb, like Zeba
 ' and Zalumna; let them be scattered in Jacob, and dispersed in
 ' Israel; put a hook in their nostrils, and turn them back the way they
 ' came.' *Proceedings in Kent*, 227.

shared in that heritage of wrong, disparagement, and loss, which has always awaited men whose feeling of self-respect has obliged them to take that position. With these persons it was not a slight matter to allow the authority of the parliament to supersede the authority of the king; or to conform, even after the general manner permitted by the law, with injunctions which they did not wholly approve. Every just and cultivated mind must sympathize with such men, and must regret that some milder course was not devised in their favour. The pain to which such spirits must have been exposed from the coarse fanaticism which too often came to the surface in those troubled times, must have been inexpressible. The men, indeed, who simply stated their objection to the new order of things and retired, were comparatively few. But there were such men: Jeremy Taylor, Bryan Walton, Fuller, and the memorable John Hales, of Eton, to the dishonour of their persecutors, were among the sufferers of this class.*

* Dr. Prideaux, bishop of Worcester, and bishop Hall, are often mentioned along with the above names, as furnishing illustration of clerical hardship and wrong. But it should be remembered that Prideaux was not content to be loyal himself—he chose to excommunicate every man in his diocese who sided with the popular cause. Hall, too, though known to us chiefly by his devotional writings, was known to his contemporaries as a restless and severe polemic, and as a special enemy to all sectaries. In his known works, the poor Brownists found small charity or tolerance; and such was the general impression concerning him, that a publication of the time which in its style was as sarcastic and bitter as anything in the Marprelate tracts, was believed to have come from his pen. Hanbury's *Hist. of Independency*, c. xxxix. We know that, pitiless as was the persecution of Laud, Hall could descend to act as spy and informer to that prelate, urging him on in his career of intolerance. Here is a letter written by him to Laud in 1631, when that prelate was bishop of London:—‘Right rev. and honourable, with best services: I was bold the last week to give your

BOOK I.
General
character of
the disaffec-
ted clergy.

The sequestered clergy generally, however, were not men of that order. Their orthodoxy was not a quiet orthodoxy. In many it consisted in an obtrusive zeal in favour of an Arminian creed, and of a popish ritual—in a state of feeling, the general tendency of which was to change the English church, so as to leave her little distinguishable from the church of Rome, and to change the English government, so as to leave it little distinguishable from the most arbitrary monarchies. It was the resolve of the Long Parliament and of the Commonwealth to free the pulpits of our English parishes, as far as possible, of such men. Remembering, too, how these men had expelled their brethren from their cures during many

‘lordship information of a busy and ignorant schismatic lurking in London; since which time I hear, to my grief, there are eleven several congregations (as they call them) of Separatists about the city, furnished with their idly-pretended pastors, who meet together in brewhouses, and such other meet places of resort, every Sunday. I do well know your lordship’s zealous and careful vigilance over that populous world of men, so as I am assured your lordship finds enough to move both your sorrow and holy fervency in the cause of God’s church; neither do I write this as to inform your lordship of what you know not, but to condole the misery of the time.’ This document is in the State Paper Office, and has been printed in Professor Masson’s *Life of Milton*, i. 632. Chillingworth was another of these illustrious sufferers. But Chillingworth proclaimed himself to the country as a passive-obedience royalist, fled in disgust to the king, and learnt to put his clerical hands to very carnal weapons at the siege of Gloucester. Chillingworth, too, could do a little of the kind of service which we have seen to have been done by Hall, reporting in the same quarter private conversations taking place at Oxford, to the heavy trouble of the persons whose indiscreet utterances he betrayed. *Ibid.* 178-180. Fuller was an honest and noble soul. But the worthy man was not sequestered until he had refused the usual oath of fidelity to the parliament, had fled to Oxford, and had become a zealous army chaplain. In 1647 he returned to London, and, proscribed as he was, he was allowed to conduct a regular weekly lecture. In the following year, Cromwell’s triers sanctioned his appointment to the rectorship of

years past, for no greater sin than refusing to read the Book of Sports from the pulpit, or to bow after a prescribed manner, it was assumed that they could have little right to complain of such a policy as unreasonable.

CHAP. IV.

The number of the sequestered clergy is a somewhat vexed question. The names of the clergy displaced by the suppression of the cathedral system, occur to a large extent in the list of the parochial clergy, most of them being possessed of livings, very many of them being pluralists. It must be borne in mind also, that with the fall of the hierarchy came an end to the old system of diocesan registration, and that the country never became so far settled as to allow of the establishment of any regular system in its room. Thus, in the case of so distinguished a person as Jeremy Taylor, who at the

Number of
sequestered
clergy.

Waltham Abbey. The loss of his books on his sequestration was his great hardship. If Bryan Walton suffered from the Presbyterians, he obtained help from the Independents. The *Biblia Polyglotta Waltoni* was published in 1657; and Cromwell had not only allowed 5000 reams of paper for it to be imported duty free, but otherwise assisted in the undertaking. Grateful mention is made of his liberality in the preface to that great work. Concerning the experiences of John Hales we have little definite information; but we shall allow an Independent to say what such men felt in regard to him: 'I reckon it not the least ignominies of that age, that so eminent a person should have been, by the iniquity of the times, reduced to those necessities under which he lived, as I account it no small honour to have grown up into some sort of his acquaintance, and conversed awhile with the living remains of one of the clearest heads and best prepared breasts in Christendom.' Andrew Marvel's *Rehearsal Transposed*, 178. We are sorry also to read, that some of the more obnoxious of the royalist clergy were not only sequestered, but sent under a guard to bishops' palaces, and that some twenty of them are said to have been confined in ships in the Thames. But if the case was really so, it might have been worse. The sufferers might have been sent, as many a Nonconformist had been, to meet a lingering death in the felon cells, and amidst the felon companionships, of the common jails.

BOOK I. beginning of the war was rector of Upingham, we have not the slightest record, either as to when he was deprived, or who was his successor.* An examination of all our diocesan and parochial registers for information on this matter could only be undertaken by government, and even then the result would be to a large extent imperfect and unsatisfactory. But there are some general grounds from which a conclusion may be formed with a near approximation to certainty.

The parishes of England in the seventeenth century were somewhat above 9,000. If we suppose, with Dr. Walker and others, that the sequestered parochial clergy were not less than 6,000, we must suppose that three-fourths of that number, at least, were sequestered sometime before the close of 1644; that is, we must suppose that in little more than two years, half the pulpits of England were declared vacant. How was this void to be supplied?† The ministers who came home from exile were able men, but their numbers would hardly have sufficed to fill up the vacancies in any large town. Oxford in those years sent her students to the battlements, instead of sending them into the church. Cambridge, too, which civil war had made to be more military than academic, was not likely to send forth candidates for holy orders even in the ordinary ratio, much less on an accelerated scale. The clergy who had been deprived of their cures by Laud and his friends were at hand, and were no doubt provided for; but it will hardly be pretended that their numbers were such as to supply the four or five thousand needed. In truth, if we suppose between four and five thousand

* Heber's *Life of Taylor*, 20. † White said there were 8,000 of the clergy who *deserved* to be expelled. Some would make him say he had expelled that number. White died in 1644!

pulpits to have been declared vacant in those two years, we must suppose some four-fifths of those parishes, at least, to have remained vacant for some years to come: and had the parliament spread spiritual destitution through the land to that extent, we may be sure that fact would have come forth as a grand article of impeachment on all occasions against it. The accusation, in such case, would have reached us in tones not to be forgotten. But we know that what must have happened if sequestration on any such scale as is affirmed had taken place, did not happen.*

But there is a shorter and more certain method by which this question may be settled. If we suppose 6,000 clergymen to have been sequestered in 1664, and that 6,000 to have consisted of men from twenty-four years of age and upwards—then, according to the laws of mortality, as determined by some of our first actuaries, there should have been 3,600 of those men living in 1660. If we suppose, which was perhaps the case, that a fourth of these 6,000 were not sequestered until Cromwell's triers came into action, that circumstance

* In Baxter's account of the conference at the Savoy in 1661 is the following passage:—'When I told them that if they cast out all the Nonconformists there would not be tolerable ministers enough to supply the congregations, bishop Morley answered, that so it was in the late times, and that some places had no ministers at all through all those times of usurpation, and named Aylesbury, which he knew to have had none upon his own knowledge. I told him that *I never knew ANY such, and therefore I knew there were not MANY such in England.* Since, I have enquired of the inhabitants about Aylesbury, and they unanimously professed that it was notoriously false, and named me the ministers which had been there successively, and usually two at once.' *Life and Times*, 340. Bishop Morley's language may be taken as a fair sample of the random assertions on this subject, in which the more prejudiced royalists were disposed to indulge.

BOOK I. would raise the 3,600 to some hundreds more. But passing over that point, it is to be remembered, that in 1660, all persons in possession of cures, the former holders of which were still living, were required, in a very summary manner, to relinquish them into the hands of the men who had been excluded from them. The question now is—*what was the number of sequestered clergy thus restored?* Baxter speaks of them as ‘many hundreds,’ and in a connexion where he would be naturally disposed not to underrate them. The Presbyterian ministers at the Savoy conference in 1661, when all the expulsions of this class had taken place, speak of the ejected as ‘several hundreds,’ and as ‘some hundreds.’* We have no reason, accordingly, to suppose that there were more than some five or six hundred displaced at that time. But if so, this number seems to prove that there never could have been more than about a thousand sequestered clergymen, between 1640 and 1660, over all England. It is not to be doubted, however, that something like double that number were so dealt with; and the only conclusion open to us is, that of the two thousand, or thereabout, who were sequestered in those twenty years, one half, in the course of that interval, were allowed to return to office in the church whose service they had relinquished, or from which they had been expelled. †

The above conclusion is corroborated by the fact, that

* *Petition for Peace. Rejoinder of the Ministers.*

† The instruments appointing the triers and commissioners to prosecute enquiries of this sort under Cromwell, found the intended proceedings on the fact, that many of the sequestered clergy, and ‘many weak, scandalous, *popish*, and *ill-affected* persons had intruded themselves, or ‘been brought into livings at that time.’ Hence, the function of these triers was not so much, in the first instance, to exclude the obnoxious, as to preclude the admission of such. Scobell’s *Acts*, 279, 365, 366, 335-347.

under the Commonwealth, it was well known that the parochial clergy in the different counties of England consisted of three parties,—viz., the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Independent parties. Baxter shows, that in all measures for joint action it was necessary to bear in mind that there was an ‘Episcopal party’ to be consulted, just as certainly as that there was a ‘Congregational party.’ All these parties were Conformists; but neither the Episcopalians nor the Independents were observant of the Presbyterian platform, and no man was concerned to make a secret of his personal preferences.

On the whole, we think the above estimate as to the number of the parochial clergy sequestered between 1640 and 1660 is the estimate warranted by facts. To make the sequestered parochial clergy some 6,000, is to make it necessary that the ejected ministers between the spring of 1660 and August, 1662, should have been between five and six thousand! We are satisfied that the clergy *permanently sequestered* from the parishes of England were not more than about ONE THOUSAND.*

* A writer in the *Quarterly Review* for July last (pp. 244, 245) has looked at this mode of settling the question of numbers, and finds no way of escaping from my conclusion, except by the monstrous assumption, that the proportion of deaths among the sequestered clergy in those twenty years rose so high from their dying of starvation! This is in fact to say, that six out of seven of the deprived clergy, who died between 1640 and 1660, died of want! We are constrained to ask, what was that overwhelming majority of rich nobles and rich gentry who come into such prominence in the parliament of 1661, about, to allow the ministers of their venerated and immaculate church to perish around them after this manner? Further, what a race of imbeciles must those 3,000 perishing clergymen have been, to have been utterly incapable of doing anything to save themselves from such an end! What reproach could be greater than the reproach which is thus cast both upon the clergy and the laity of the English church? The

BOOK I.

Parliament
becomes
more Pres-
byterian and
intolerant.

We are far, however, from meaning to justify all that was done by the parliamentary chiefs in support of this policy. In what we have said, our object has been simply to guard their conduct against unjust and ungenerous imputations; in brief, to present the real truth

ejected Nonconformists suffered much, but not at all after that manner. The government killed off many of them by imprisonment, but we doubt if a man among them died from want. The good Philip Henry, we are told, 'knew, within a few miles round him, so many ministers 'turned out to the wide world, stripped of all their maintenance, and 'exposed to continual hardships, as, with their wives and children, 'most of them having numerous families, made up above a hundred, 'and, though oft reduced to wants and straits, *yet were not forsaken*, but 'were enabled to rejoice in the Lord, to whom the promise was fulfilled, '*—So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*'—'One 'observation Mr. Henry made, not long before he died, when he had 'been young, and now was old, that though many of the ejected 'ministers were brought very low, had many children, were greatly 'harassed by persecution, and their friends generally poor and unable 'to support them; yet in all his acquaintance he never knew, nor could 'remember to have heard, of any Nonconformist minister in prison '(for debt) or in debt.' *Life of Philip Henry*, 61, 62. Mr. Serjeant Charlton, in presenting the Act of Uniformity to the king in 1662, said, in opposition to the proposed allowance of a fifth part of the living to the ejected minister, that such a grant, '*joined with the piety of the party, would amount to more than the value of the whole living.*' This was no doubt an exaggeration; but the inferences from it are obvious. There was another reason of the commons' dissent, said the serjeant, '*that divers wives and children of orthodox ministers were made miserable by some of these men.*' *Lords' Journals*, May 7. The serjeant knew nothing of multitudes—thousands, dying of starvation. On the whole, if what the reviewer in the *Quarterly* has asserted is the best that can be said, this question may be taken as settled, and we have a right to say that the royalist clergy permanently excluded from the parishes of England were not more than one thousand. Dr. Gauden, and the author of that inflammatory pamphlet, intitled *Persecutio Undecima*, knew that many had been sequestered, and their prejudices taught them to trust to their imaginations for the aggregate, and an imaginary affair they made of it.

in relation to some of the matters at issue between them and their opponents. It must be confessed, however, that as many of the more moderate royalists withdrew to the king, and as the influence of the Scots came into the place of such men, giving new strength to the rigid Presbyterian element in the two houses, those broader and higher objects for which the war had been waged, were by degrees largely superseded in favour of a policy too purely theological and ecclesiastical, and, as a natural consequence, too little tolerant of differences. CHAP. IV.

It will be sufficient to mention in this place the act passed in 1648, to prevent 'the growth and spreading of heresy and blasphemy.' That act declared, that all persons who should deny the existence, or traduce the perfections of the Supreme Being; who should reject the divine authority of the canonical scriptures, the doctrine of the Trinity, of the Atonement, or of the Resurrection, should be accounted guilty of felony, and refusing to abjure his errors should suffer death. An offender recanting was to find bail against any repetition of his crime, and on a second conviction was to die as a felon. The same act provides, that all persons avowing the doctrine of universal restoration, of freewill, or of a middle state after death; all persons who say that God may be worshipped by means of images and pictures; that the light in man is to be followed even when contrary to the written word; that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are not Christian ordinances; or who shall broach the errors of the anabaptists concerning baptism; and all persons who shall declare that the moral law is not a rule of life to the believer; that man need not repent, nor pray for the pardon of his sins; that children should not be taught to pray; that the

Acts against
heresy and
blasphemy.

BOOK I. Lord's day is not what the laws of the land affirm it to be ; or that ' church government by presbytery is anti-christian or unlawful,' shall recant his errors, and find bail for his future conduct, or suffer indefinite imprisonment.* It will be seen that this act supposes the existence, and open avowal, of Atheism and Deism, of Unitarianism and Arminianism, and couples the licence of the Antinomian with the mysticism of the Quakers. In 1648, the great remedy of the parliament, it seems, against these errors of the times, consisted in the staff of the constable, the miseries of a prison cell, and the use of the hangman. It is manifest that the Long Parliament is not improving in wisdom or temper, and its days are not likely to be many. The desperate junto who passed this act hoped by this means to scare and crush the Independents in the army, and the sects who were in a measure sheltered by them. But there were Presbyterians who did not concur in this policy, and the Independents were little moved by it.

The Presbyterian clergy never ceased to be diligent students, zealous preachers and pastors, and they succeeded through many years in giving—to use their own language—a face of godliness to the parishes of England. Too much praise can hardly be given them on this ground. But the time came in which both the divines and the statesmen of this party were to show themselves unequal to the great political crisis which they had done so much to evoke. In the meanwhile, another party, not less old in our history, but of slower growth, was making its existence felt both in England and America, and was about to come in as a more advanced wave in the history of English thought, and of English action.

* Scobel's *Acts*, 149, 150.

The rise of Independency, and of the larger and freer thinking to which Independency gave comparative protection and encouragement, constitutes the second, and the more developed phase of the great revolution which dates from the meeting of the Long Parliament.

CHAP. IV.

Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, and in the time of her successor, Nonconformists who had separated from the established church began their migration to Holland. Humble men and women, in London, in Gainsborough, and in a village named Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire, had heard that the Dutch were a sober and industrious nation, and granted liberty of worship to strangers who chose to settle among them. So precious to the heart of those people was the thought of such liberty, that to gain it, families who had never seen the sea, and many who had never travelled far beyond their own homestead, covenanted together to go to that land, and to cast themselves on Providence in that strange and far-off country.* The Rev. Richard

Migration
of English
Separatists
to Holland.

* One of the sufferers thus writes of the lot which had befallen them at home: 'Some were taken and clapped up in prison; others had their houses beset and watched night and day, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain to fly and leave their habitations, and the means of their livelihood.' What they felt in prospect of seeking a new home is thus indicated: 'To go into a country they knew not but by hearsay, where they must learn a new language, and get their livings they knew not how, it being a dear place, and subject to the miseries of war, it was by many thought an adventure almost desperate, a case intolerable, and a misery worse than death; especially seeing they were not acquainted with trades nor traffic, (by which the country doth subsist,) but had only been used to a plain country life, and the innocent trade of husbandry. But these things did not dismay them, (although they did sometimes trouble them,) for their desires were set on the ways of God, and to enjoy his ordinances. They rested on his providence, and knew in whom they had believed.'

BOOK I.

Clifton, formerly rector of Babworth, near Scrooby, accompanied the people who were the fruit of his spiritual labour in their exile. The church under his oversight at Amsterdam is said to have numbered three hundred members. The church of the same character, under the Rev. John Robinson, at Leyden, was hardly less numerous. Much had those people endured in their attempts to escape from the country which had given them birth, but which would not give them a religious home; and much were they to endure from the want of suitable employment among a people of foreign ways and foreign speech. But after a while, their industry and moral worth procured them friends, and they found a fair supply of their simple wants.

Migration
to America.

The reader will remember that from the church at Leyden went those memorable adventurers who were the founders of New Plymouth, known in history as the Pilgrim Fathers. Other voluntary exiles followed in the wake of the pilgrims. So constant, indeed, and so widening was the stream which flowed in that direction from this country, that when the Long Parliament assembled, New Plymouth and Boston had become mother settlements to a fair progeny. Not less than fifty thousand persons, it was supposed, had left our shores in search of a freedom in New England which they had despaired of realizing in the old. Of so much importance had those colonies become, that when the assembly of divines was about to meet at Westminster, the churches of New England were invited to send some of their learned men to assist in its delibera-

Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation, 10, 11. Hunter's Collections concerning the Church and Congregation of Protestant Separatists formed at Scrooby.

tions. In fact, during the oppressions of the last ten years, many of the bravest and wisest gentlemen in England, persons of large wealth, and even peers of the realm, were prompted to look towards that western world as a promised land to all men capable of feeling that to cease to live would be a less evil than to cease to be religiously free.* Nor were all the early settlers in those regions persons from humble life. Without a considerable admixture of the kind of thoughtfulness which comes from religion aided by education, the history of those colonies would not have become such as we find it. Among the men of some mark and position who sailed in the *Mayflower*, were Bradford, and Brewster, and Winslow, and Standish—men who left an impress on the settlement at New Plymouth which was not to be effaced. It was so in the colony of Massachusetts. The colonists were mostly persons to be influenced by intelligence, and there were intelligent men to influence them. Winthrop, more than once governor of Massachusetts, was a man to lead men; and for a while, Harry Vane, afterwards so prominent in our English history, filled that office.

CHAP. IV.

Character of
the colonists
in America.

Colonists have generally become such from purely

* In 1641 Milton thus wrote: 'What numbers of faithful and freeborn Englishmen and good Christians have been constrained to forsake their dearest home, their friends and kindred, whom nothing but the wide ocean and the savage deserts of America could hide and shelter from the fury of the bishops. Let the astrologer be dismayed at the portentous blaze of comets, and impressions in the air, as foretelling troubles and changes to states; I shall believe there cannot be a more ill-boding sign to a nation—God turn the omen from us—than when the inhabitants, to avoid insufferable grievances at home, are enforced by heaps to forsake their native country.' *Reformation in England*, Book ii.

BOOK I.
Grand motive with the American settlers.

commercial or secular considerations. Our special interest in the early American colonies arises from the fact that their object was not so much secular as religious. They consisted of persons who believed themselves to be possessed with the idea of Christianity which is set forth in its own records, in distinction from the conventional and corrupt forms of it everywhere about them. They feared, and not without reason, that it might be their lot to see their views of the Christian religion die out in Holland from the fewness of their numbers; and to see them crushed out in England by the hostility of the government. Believing, as they did, that their creed, their polity, and their worship were the same which had been so precious among the people who first bore the Christian name, it was natural they should wish to give place and establishment to principles so regarded, in some region where they might take root, grow, and expand. In their great enterprise their spiritual liberty was their first object, and in relation to that they aimed to provide, not simply for themselves, nor for their children, but for the unborn and remote generations of men.

Their ideal state.

In the Christendom familiar to this new race of colonists, the state was everywhere more or less hostile to the spiritual freedom of the church. To their imagination an order of things was present, in which the magistrate and the minister, the state and the church, should be at one, and at one in their endeavour to realize this scriptural idea of the Christian life. They coveted a settled home of that character for themselves, for their children, and for all who shared in their faith and feeling. In this 'New England way,' as it was afterwards called, we see a sequence from the circum-

stances of the people with whom it originated. It was a manner of social and religious life very unlike that which had been familiar to them in the England of the past. But it had been suggested to them by the law of contrast. And when the Long Parliament had checked the tide of western emigration, by taking away the motive that had led to it, the new polity of the new world often came to the surface in the discussions arising in this country.

CHAP. IV.

The New England settlers migrated as churches. But each settlement, on forming itself into a church, was obliged to form itself into a state; and the great difficulty in giving existence to a state was to ensure that the state should not be stronger than the church, or at least not hostile to it. Such relations of the state to the church had been the old world grievance. How was it to be provided against in the new? Down to 1640, the rule in all the existing settlements was, that the church should in fact be the state, church membership, and not property, being the condition of the franchise. So the idea embodied in the polity of those infant states was to a great extent theocratic. In effect the Bible became the statute law, both for church and state. It pertained to the enfranchised to interpret that law, and to administer it. The magistrate, in common with the minister, must be a church member, and the elections in either case were virtually church acts.

New union
of Church
and State.

But the churches of which this may be said, were, nevertheless, all of them Congregational or Independent. Attempts were made in favour of Episcopacy and of Presbyterianism; but they had not been anywhere successful. In this country, and in Holland, the prayer of these Congregationalists had been for toleration,

The New
England
churches all
Congrega-
tional.

BOOK I. and for nothing more. But their new circumstances as colonists brought with them new ideas and necessities, and their special form of polity, both civil and ecclesiastical, was the natural result. To be spiritually independent had been the great purpose of their migration; and the law of self-preservation in relation to that independency disposed them to the course which gave so marked a character to their legislation. The impression of the settlers was, that their little state was not only their church, but their house and home. It was to them an inclosure as sacred as their fireside. They had braved much and suffered much to make it their own, and they concluded that they had a right to determine the conditions on which others should be admitted to its advantages. In their view, it was an acquisition made, not for themselves merely, but for posterity; and they thought it became them to guard it most religiously against injury, and against the danger of injury. To all who concurred in the bases on which their humble commonwealth was founded, they gave a cordial welcome. But persons who sought to disturb those bases, and to substitute others for them, were admonished to be silent; and were reminded, that if disposed to found a state after some fancy pattern of their own, the broad land was before them in which to make the experiment; but that for themselves, their order of proceeding was determined and established, and the person or persons who should persist in endeavouring to disturb it would not be tolerated in so doing.

Charge of
persecution.

There were parties, however, who did not admit the reasonableness of this policy, and who branded the action founded upon it as persecution. Beyond a doubt, this theory of the colonists, pure and elevated as it may

have been in its conception, was one that could not be sustained in a large community without entailing the consequence alleged. And as those communities became larger, their maxims of this nature were gradually relaxed, the distinction between the two swords, the civil and the ecclesiastical, being by degrees more definitely and distinctly recognized.

CHAP. IV.

But in the small and feeble colony of Massachusetts, it was natural that such onslaughts as were made upon its order by Roger Williams, by Mrs. Hutchinson, and by the Quakers, should be met with a determined resistance. By the conduct of those parties, the claimed and established rights of the colonists were invaded, and their most vital interests imperilled. Mrs. Hutchinson's antinomian virulence and activity were such as no church having any pretension to discipline could tolerate; and in Massachusetts, not to be tolerated by the church, was not to be tolerated by the state. The agitation conducted by Roger Williams tended to the destruction of nearly everything that had been done by the men who had founded the state and who still governed it.* The teaching of the Quakers was even

Case of
Roger Wil-
liams, Mrs.
Hutchinson
and the
Quakers.

* Roger Williams was a native of Carmarthenshire, studied for a short time at Oxford, and is believed to have been admitted to orders in the Church of England. By his skill in shorthand, and his general ability, he obtained the favourable notice of Sir Edward Coke, but becoming by the force of his convictions a Separatist, he left England, and sought an asylum in the colony at Boston. He was a large-hearted, high-souled man, but his self-assertion was enormous. His temperament, mentally and physically, never allowed him to be at rest. His conscientiousness was acute, but it lacked discrimination and breadth, and made him exceedingly difficult to please. The troubles which had beset him in England soon came about him in Boston. He would not commune with the church there, because the members refused to make an open confession of their great sin in having ever been in communion

BOOK I. more hostile to everything which the colonists had resolved should be accounted as concluded and settled. The men of Massachusetts gave special warning to this last class of religionists, declaring, in effect, that their poor settlement was their home and hearth, and should not be obtruded upon without permission. The virtual, if not the formal, answer of the Quakers was,—‘Such
 ‘ may be thy notions, friend, but we have a divine com-
 ‘ mission to claim the right of place, of hearing, and of
 ‘ action in that house, and by that hearth of thine, and
 ‘ we shall act upon this commission whether thou likest
 ‘ it or not, and mean to leave scarcely a stone of the
 ‘ religious edifice thou hast reared there upon another

with the Church of England. We scarcely need say that it required something more than the rebuke of a young man of five-and-twenty to dispose the grave persons who ruled in Massachusetts to put on sackcloth for such a reason. Williams further alleged that the magistrate had no authority to punish men for any breach of the first table of the decalogue, which includes its first four precepts. There was a great truth involved in that assertion; but as made by Williams it was an assertion that idolatry, perjury, blasphemy, and sabbath-breaking were not to be in any way restrained or corrected by the civil power. Another doctrine of this bold innovator was, that an oath ought not to be administered to an unregenerate man, inasmuch as an oath is an act of worship, and an unregenerate man cannot be a worshipper. On this ground Williams opposed and denounced the oath which the government tendered to the freemen of Massachusetts. Another of the notions which exposed him to inconvenience, was that which led him to assert, that the colonists had none of them any right to the soil of which they had taken possession. The king’s patent, he maintained, could not give any valid title; that could only come from a compact with the natives. So the Massachusetts men were to undo all they had done, to begin *ab initio*, and to pursue wholly new paths of policy—and at such a bidding! According to Williams’s own characteristic confession, the venerable leaders of that little commonwealth were very patient and affectionate towards him even while visiting him with penalty. But they saw that they could not live in peace with him;

‘before we have done with thee.’ Hence came the deadly struggle between the Massachusetts colonists and the English Quakers.

In England, the Puritans had vanquished the cavalier chivalry, and the Quakers were now bent on vanquishing the Puritans. But it was to be by weapons of another order. The Puritans had braved suffering and death by the sword. The Quakers were prepared to brave the same things by another sort of endurance. It was an age of extraordinary excitement. The old English blood wanted a new vent, and found it. Prynne was not more intent on humbling the pride of Laud, than the Quakers were intent on humbling the greatness of the Presbyterians and Independents. The war feeling was

and as it was much more natural that he should seek a new home than that they should do so, they made him understand that he must take that course. So extreme was Williams’s Independency, that he took exception to the sort of association among ministers which had existed in England under the name of ‘prophesyings,’ lest it should bring in Presbyterianism: and when the church of Boston displeased him, he called upon his own church at Salem to separate from it, and upon the Salemites refusing to do so, he dissolved his connexion with them, and stood alone, and would not pray or say grace at table with his own wife, because she would not follow his example. In Rhode Island he became a Baptist, but soon began to doubt the validity even of his adult baptism, from some idea that it wanted a clear apostolic descent. His abstract assertions concerning liberty of conscience were large and noble, but they were so far wanting in clear definition and adjustment, that in practice he often infringed upon his own maxims. His name would not have been so honourably associated with Rhode Island, if he had not been careful to exact there the submission which he had himself refused to render in Massachusetts. Before his death, he began to see that there are many things which men may say and do ‘pretending conscience,’ the ‘restraining and punishing’ of which is ‘so far from being persecution properly so called, that it is a duty and command of God unto all mankind.’ *George Fox digged out of his Burrows*, 199, 200. Palfrey’s *New England*, i. c. x. See App. I.

BOOK I. not really stronger in Cromwell and his Ironsides than in George Fox and the men and women who imbibed his spirit. This temper made them zealous missionaries abroad as well as at home. The old royalists encouraged the extravagance they despised. It was doing their work. The great and avowed mission of this sect was to protest against the 'steeple-houses;' to put an end to a paid ministry; to abolish oaths; to proscribe the use of arms; and so to interpret their doctrine of an inner light as to claim for their fancies the authority of a virtual inspiration. Filled with the mystical notion that their impulses were not so much human as divine, there seemed to be no end to their eccentricities, their invasions of the rights of their neighbours, or even to their indecencies. Every ministry beyond that of their own sect was the ministry of 'Baal' and of 'Antichrist.' They assailed ministers as such in the public streets, even such men as Baxter, flinging the most offensive language at them as a testimony from heaven. They entered churches to interrupt the public worship with the air of so many prophets. Women made their appearance there in white sheets or in sackcloth, and stood before the preacher for a sign to an obdurate and benighted generation. Fox himself records even more offensive conduct than this with admiration.*

* 'Robert Huntingdon was moved of the Lord to go into Carlisle 'steeple-houses with a white sheet about him, among the great Presbyterians and Independents there, to show them that the surplice was 'coming up again; and he put a halter about his neck, to show that 'the halter was coming upon them.' Fox's *Journal*, 323. 'Richard Sale was moved to go to the steeple-house in the time of their 'worship, and to carry a lanthorn and candle as a figure of their darkness.' *Ibid.* 'Many ways were these professors warned; by word, 'by writing, and by signs. William Sympson was moved of the Lord 'to go at several times, for three years, *naked* and barefooted before

When menaced with irruptions from this quarter, the colonists of New England consulted on the course that should be taken; and resolved, that their homes should not be exposed to the utterly disorganizing influence of quakerism. It was agreed, that all such persons should be arrested on their arrival, and that the ships which brought them should be compelled, under a heavy fine, to take them away. But this, unhappily, did not prove to be enough. Men and women came on this mission, and were reshipped. But they *would* return, denouncing the ministers of the colony as 'hirelings,'—'Baals,'—'seed of the serpent,' and the like. It was now made to be law, that men or women reviling ministers or magistrates in this manner, should be whipped, or otherwise punished, according to the old English custom in such cases. It was also enacted, that in flagrant instances, the offender should be liable to lose his ears, and to have his tongue bored. In one instance the loss of the ear was inflicted. The punishment took place in prison. This barbarous proceeding, too, had come from the mother country. But, after that sad day, America saw no repetition of it.

It was an old law in Massachusetts, that a banished person returning without permission should be executed as a felon. No banished man, in consequence, had ever been known to return. This law was now made to 'them, as a sign to them, in *markets, courts, towns, cities, to priests' houses, and to great men's houses, telling them, "so should they be stripped naked as he was stripped naked!"* And sometimes he was 'moved to put on a hair sackcloth, and to besmear his face, and to tell them, "So would the Lord God besmear all their religion as he was besmeared."' *Ibid.* See an instance of the horror with which these people were regarded, even by rigid Baptists, in the *Broadmead Records*. The common belief was, that many of them were disguised Romanists, or the tools of such. 44-56.

BOOK I.

embrace the banished Quaker. To the amazement of the Massachusetts authorities, two men, Robertson and Stevenson, returned after banishment, with the avowed intention of trying 'the bloody law unto death.' Mary Dyer, a married woman, who had long since made herself very obnoxious to the people of Boston on other grounds, returned with them. The conduct of the woman was a second offence of the kind. If the Boston magistrates had expected such an exigency to arise, it is probable they would never have exposed themselves to it: but it had come. The trial now was a trial of strength—strength of purpose. Robertson, Stevenson, and the woman, would not promise to quit the colony. The magistrates would not give way. The execution followed. It was a sad spectacle. In the court, the sentence had been pronounced by a majority of one only. One more enforcement of this law was the last. Much is sometimes made of this alleged Puritan persecution in America. Such is the worst phase of it. We may respect the conscientiousness, and the indomitable will, evinced by the apostles of quakerism, but who can respect the covert egotism, and idiotic folly, by which those qualities were sustained? The fault was not all on one side. The monstrous arrogance with which those men and women insisted on the right of being allowed to infringe on the social rights of their neighbours, under the plea of conscience, and to heap insults upon them, was itself an insufferable intolerance. It belongs to the magistrate to coerce such people, and to make the coercion strong according to the exigency.

No doubt many a Quaker was unjustly, coarsely, and cruelly dealt with, both by magistrates and mobs, in New England and in this country. But the sober and

pious of the sect would never have suffered as they did, if the madness of the mad men and women among them had not been such as it was. Were quakerism to become now what it was then, the feeling against it would be bitter and overwhelming. Sober men in Westminster and in Boston, saw in such excesses, the abuse, and not the legitimate exercise, of Christian liberty. It is only to be regretted, that their efforts to curb such extravagance were not so regulated as to secure them against the charge of harshness or cruelty. The sum of the whole is, these people had wrought out a state of freedom for themselves, and they were resolved that it should not be wrested from them by others.*

But by the New England 'way' in ecclesiastical affairs, the reader must understand the novel kind of government which has been described. Separatists in the towns and cities of England, and in the armies of the parliament, had friends in those regions, who wrote freely to them concerning what was doing in their new country. Tracts and pamphlets on the subject multiplied rapidly; and many saw, or thought they saw, in the haze of that distant region, a foreshadowing of that rule of the just,—of that 'reign of the saints,' which the Bible was supposed to have foretold. The special relation of the Congregational churches of those budding states to the civil power, was seen by the more reflecting as an effect of certain novel conditions in social life; but in the case of not a few, we can trace a colouring of personal ideas which was evidently derived from that distant and half-fabulous land on the other side the great Atlantic.†

* Palfrey's *New England*. See Appendix, I.

† 'In 1637, a number of Puritan ministers in England became somewhat distressed by reports which reached them concerning some novel opinions and proceedings in the churches of New England, and

BOOK I.

Progress of the principle of religious toleration among English Separatists.

Two conclusions became settled in the mind of the Separatists under Elizabeth. The first was, that true religion has its origin, not from state enactments, but in individual conviction. The second was, that a church, in a scriptural and Christian sense, must be the result of a joint and free consent on the part of the individuals who are to constitute it. In thinking after this manner, those early dissenters were distinguished from the Christians of their own age, and became one with the Christians of the first age. In this thinking also, the doctrine of religious toleration was involved by logical sequence, if not directly avowed. The language of Robert Browne was, 'To compel religion, to plant churches by power,

they sent over to their brethren a friendly letter of enquiry relating to nine points of church order. It was said that the New England churches repudiated the use of a liturgy; the baptism of infants except one of the parents should be a believer; and the reception of any persons to the Lord's table who had not become members of the church; that ministers, as they receive their appointment from the congregation may be removed by the same authority; that no minister can have right to exercise his function in a church of which he is not an officer without permission; and that the members of one church were not to commune with another. The New England brethren said, in reply, that the use of a liturgy had never been allowed to prevent their worshipping with good men; and though they did not use the Book of Common Prayer, many of their ministers used a form of their own composition before preaching. They confessed that their practice concerning baptism was such as had been stated. On all the other points they gave answers which show that their practice was such as is still common among Congregational churches. This correspondence, which was of considerable length, was published under the following title in 1643: '*A Letter of Many Ministers in Old England, requesting the judgment of their Reverend Brethren in New England, concerning Nine Positions. Written A.D. 1637. Together with their Answer thereto, returned anno 1639, and the Reply made unto the said Answer.* Now published, upon the desire of many Godly and Faithful Ministers in and about the City of London. By Simeon Ash, and William Rathband.'

‘and to force a submission to ecclesiastical government by law and penalties, belongeth not to magistrates, neither yet to the church.’* Browne and his followers were charged by their opponents with holding this principle, and were branded as heretics on that account.† But it must be confessed, that Barrow, Greenwood, and the Independent exiles in Holland, supposed the magistrate to have some province even in regard to religion. With an established church existing, and likely to exist, it was natural that they should regard the state as responsible for such a regulation of the affairs of the church as might be favourable to the diffusion of religion. Much of their language concerning the duty of the magistrate in this respect probably means no more than this. But there are passages in which they speak explicitly as to the right and duty of the state to suppress false doctrine and to uphold the true; though the mode and extent in which this may be done they nowhere clearly state. Robinson says, ‘That godly magistrates are by compulsion to repress public and notable idolatry, as also to provide that the truth of God, in his ordinances, be taught and published in their dominions, I make no doubt; it may be also, it is not unlawful for them, by some penalty or other, to provoke their subjects universally unto hearing, for their instruction and conversion; yea, to grant they

* *Reformation without Tarrying*, 12. Middleburgh, 1582.

† ‘He maketh many arguments to prove that princes are not to be stayed for, nor yet to have to do, by public power, to establish religion. Which opinion of his, is such abridging the sacred power of princes, and such horrible injury to the church, contrary to the manifest word of God, that if there were nothing else, it is enough to make him an odious heretic, until he show repentance.’ Giffard’s *Answer to the Brownists*, 104.

BOOK I. ' may inflict the same upon them, if, after due teaching, ' they offer not themselves unto the church.* This is not language we should have expected from an Independent. But most of the Independents of that time spoke more or less after this manner. It was always assumed, however, that the province of the magistrate was not to legislate on such matters, but simply to execute the will of Christ, and that will was supposed to be embodied in the doctrine and polity of Congregational churches. It could never be the duty of the magistrate, accordingly, to show himself otherwise than friendly to such organisations. On the other hand, it became him to discountenance Romanism; partly because it was idolatrous, but mainly because it was not so much a religion, as a formidable political organization, menacing the rights and interests of society from all points. Protestantism, it seems, embraced no diversity which, in the judgment of these good men, should not be tolerated. Their views on this vital point, if not perfect, were greatly in advance of their times. Even such men were not at once to perceive, that authority in religion, if ceded to the state at all, must be ceded for good or evil, with the certainty, in fact, that the bias of its patronage will always be, not so much in favor of the spiritual, as of the not spiritual.†

* *Justification of Separation*, 242, 243.

† Even Milton, large as were his views both of civil and religious liberty, could not see his way to a toleration of Romanism. ' But as ' for popery and idolatry, why they also may not have plea to be ' tolerated, I have much less to say. Their religion, the more considered, the less can be acknowledged a religion, but a Roman principality rather, endeavouring to keep up her old universal dominion ' under a new name and under shadow of a catholic religion; being ' indeed more rightly named a catholic heresy against the scripture,

In 1609, the Rev. Henry Jacob rose to the distinction of being the first Nonconformist in our history who ventured to address the dread authority of the state, praying that 'Toleration and liberty' might be granted to all loyal subjects, 'to enjoy and observe the ordinances of Jesus Christ in the administration of his churches, in lieu of human constitutions.' Jacob was a clergyman who had now become the pastor of a Congregational church assembling under secrecy in Southwark. In his own behalf, and in behalf of others, he thus writes: 'That whereas our Lord Jesus Christ hath given to each particular church, or ordinary congregation, this right and privilege, viz., to elect, ordain, and deprive her own ministers, and to exercise all the other parts of lawful ecclesiastical jurisdiction under him, your majesty would be pleased to order, as well, that each particular church that shall be allowed to partake in the benefit of the said toleration, may have, enjoy, and put in execution and practice this her said right and privilege; and that some of your subaltern civil officers may be appointed to demand and receive of each church a due and just account of their proceedings.' His majesty is assured that Independent churches do not despise synods, so long as their function is deliberative and persuasive, not authoritative; and that in the order of such churches there is no dangerous parity, but all the real variety found in nature, and in the ordinary polity of nations. Romanists are not included in this suit, because that 'profession is directly contrary to

CHAP. IV.

Petition for liberty of worship by Henry Jacob, 1609.

'supported mainly by a civil, and, except in Rome, by a foreign power: justly therefore to be suspected, and not tolerated by the magistrate of another country.' Works, Vol. III. *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, 317.

BOOK I. the lawful state and government of free countries.* But on the other hand, say the petitioners, 'We do not disdain communion with such churches as in point of ecclesiastical regimen differ from us, but are ready to communicate with them in the Lord's worship, when we may do the same without personal and voluntary participation in sin.' The language of this 'Supplication' expresses the opinion and feeling which were general among the English Independents, both in Holland and in this country, at that time. It was opinion which embraced a large, if not an unlimited, toleration. †

* 'No opinions contrary to human society, or to those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society, are to be tolerated by the magistrate. Those have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate, who will not own and teach the duty of tolerating all men in matters of mere religion.' *Locke's Works*, ii. 261.

† *To the Right High and Mighty Prince James, by the Grace of God, King of Great Brittain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. The Humble Supplication, &c.* In quarto. 1609. In the same year Jacob published a treatise, intitled '*The beginning of Christ's Visible Church,*' &c., in which he thus writes concerning Independency: 'It has been shown that such a popular government as this is, being limited within the bounds of one particular congregation, neither is, nor ever hath been, nor can be in the least sort, dangerous to any civil state whatsoever, but may easily, yea with violence be resisted, and punished by any the nearest next dwelling officer of justice, if any person or persons in the church *become seditious or refractory.* Beside, this government is to be informed and directed by the pastor chiefly, and also by the grave assistant elders, and, therefore, this government is not simply and plainly democratical, but partly aristocratical and partly monarchical: and so it is that mixed government which the learned do judge to be the best government of all.'

The use of the name 'Independent,' as applied to Congregational churches, has been commonly attributed to Robinson's use of the word 'Independenter,' in his *Apology*, published in 1619. But the word occurs more emphatically in the above treatise, by Jacob, which had appeared eight years before. 'Each congregation,' he writes, 'is an entire and INDEPENDENT body politic, and indued with power imme-

The Baptists embraced this liberal doctrine in common with the Independents, and some years later avowed it more fully. In 1611, what is called the Baptist Confession of Faith was published. In that document it is said, 'The magistrate is not to meddle with religion, nor matters of conscience, nor to compel men to this or that form of religion, because Christ is the king and law-giver of the church and conscience.' The author of the treatise named 'Religion's Peace,' published in 1614, and the authors of the dialogue, intitled 'Persecution for Religion Judged and Condemned,' published in 1615, plead explicitly that toleration should be extended to religious opinions of all kinds. The 'London Citizen,' to whom we are indebted for the first of these publications, prays—'That the king and parliament may please to permit all sorts of Christians, yea, Jews, Turks, and Pagans, so long as they are peaceable, and no malefactors.*' If the Baptists generally were prepared to endorse this opinion, certainly that is more than could be said of the Independents. How far the somewhat more limited concessions of the Independents were the result of a more considerate estimate of the circumstances of the times, and of a wiser precaution, we shall not attempt to determine.

It would not, however, be easy to strike the balance of liberality between the two bodies. If the Baptists grew to be the most liberal in respect to toleration according to law, it will, we suppose, be admitted, that the Independents were the most liberal in respect to the toleration which depends on personal feeling and opinion.

'diately under and from Christ, as every proper church is, and ought to be.' P. 13.

* *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience.* Edited by Underhill.

BOOK I. Complete liberty embraces the political and the social; and social liberty supposes the presence of enlightened principles of action, and of enlightened feeling, as between man and man. The disposition of the Independents generally to recognize piety in the church of England, and even in the church of Rome, was deemed highly reprehensible by their Baptist brethren. The authors of 'Persecution Judged' labour hard to show, that to commune with the Church of England was 'to worship the beast,' and to share in the final curse awaiting such offenders. Even private religious fellowship with Conformists was, in consequence, condemned. Henry Jacob, and Robinson still more, were far from holding such opinions.*

* J. 'It is affirmed by some, that in respect of personal graces, some of the professors (as they are called) are the children of God, and may be communicated with privately, though in respect of their church actions they are members of antichrist's body, to whom the judgments of God appertaineth.'

C. 'This opinion proceedeth not from God's word, but from man's vain heart, by the suggestion of the devil.' *Persecution Judged.*

Liberality in this form, on the part of the Independents, was long censured by their stricter brethren as inconsistent with Christian fidelity.

The following is the language in which the author of 'Religion's Peace' writes concerning Robinson, of Leyden: 'Yea, I know by experience among the people called Brownists, that a man shall not draw them to write, though they be desired: for one of their preachers, called Master Robinson, has had a writing of mine in his hands above six months, and as yet I can get no answer. *It seems he knoweth not how better to hide his errors than by silence. And this will be the case of all false bishops and ministers, who had rather be mute and dumb, than to be drawn into the light with their errors.*' P. 52. Another writer of authority, adverting to Robinson, says: 'Do we not know the beginnings of his church?—that there was first one stood up and made a covenant, and then another, and these two joined together, and so a third, and these became a church, say they; which we deny, *except a synagogue of Satan.* For was ever church

We scarcely need say, that toleration is a duty to the utmost extent in which it can be seen to be compatible with social safety, and that it becomes suicide if allowed to pass beyond those limits. This maxim supposes that there may be circumstances in which to cede an unlimited religious liberty may not be a duty, but the contrary. It is quite true, that religious liberty, in its strictest sense, is a right inherent in man. But it is a right that may become allied with so much wrong as to be forfeited. Romanism in those days was not simply a religion. It was a great political organization. His holiness not only assumed the right of deposing princes, and of absolving their subjects from their allegiance,—he exercised it. Under Elizabeth, duty to him made his spiritual children traitors to their sovereign. Hence, to the Englishmen of that time, to suppress Romanism, was not to suppress a religion, but an organized, avowed, and active form of treason. Modern Catholics profess not to be bound by the decrees of popes in political matters, and they have obtained their relief bill on the ground of that profession. Perhaps, the large liberty which men like Barrow and Robinson claimed, not only for themselves, but for others, was as large as could be deemed just by thoughtful men in the condition of opinion and parties in their day. We happily live in times in which the larger maxims of the early Brownists and of the early Baptists may be safely acted upon; in which, indeed, it would be a crime not to act upon them.*

‘of the New Testament made by a covenant without baptism?’ &c. *A Description of what God hath predestinated concerning Man*, 169. Printed 1620. The light had come, but the process of dividing it from the darkness was still a process.

* Mr. Carlyle has filled the heads of some of our literary men with

BOOK I.

Baptists and
Pædobap-
tists alike
Independ-
ents.

Baptists and pædobaptists were separated from each other by an outward shadow only, which should never have divided them. They were alike Independents—really one. From Charles I. and his great ecclesiastical adviser, Laud, neither body could expect anything, and they did not solicit anything. With the meeting of the Long Parliament they came into comparative prominence together, having common principles and common objects, and they have their place side by side, in the camp and in the senate, to the time of the Restoration. In what we say, accordingly, concerning the Independents during this interval, we must be understood as including the two denominations.

Progress
of free
thought—
Lilburne,
Burton.

As the troubles in Scotland which were to evoke our Long Parliament began to move towards England, the idea, that where there is certainty in religious opinion, as a natural sequence there will be, and ought to be, persecution—that is, the use of force by the strong to save the weak from the consequences of their errors. But it happens that the man of high intelligence and culture can hardly be so sure about his supposed truth, as the senseless bigot generally is; and if strong conviction must be supposed to give licence to persecute, we fear the peace of the world will be in very sorry keeping. The maxim intended to be elicited by this reasoning is—that to make men tolerant you must make them sceptical. Would not the wiser course be to send them to school where the great basis of the teaching will be—let every man be persuaded in his own mind? When it is said that an infallible church ought to persecute, it is to be remembered that the only infallible founders of a church the world has ever seen did not exemplify or teach that maxim. We say this without meaning to say that coercion cannot touch opinion. History shows that it may, in the process of time, influence, change, and fix the opinion of communities. In many regions it has sufficed to crush or exile truth, and to establish error. The great thing needed is, that mankind should come to see that all opinions should be left free so long as they do not come forth into such action as may trench upon social right; and in English history this principle owes its origin and development to the joint influence of the Independents and the Baptists.

more zealous reformers in this country sent forth many publications in which the sins of the government, both in church and state, were exposed in strong language. John Lilburne distinguished himself in this way. Lilburne was a young man of good family, of considerable literary ability, and of that ardent religious temperament which often seems to court suffering for conscience' sake. He had assailed the hierarchy some time since, and had been subjected in consequence to degrading punishments. He now renewed his onslaught upon his old persecutors. The church of England, exclaimed Lilburne, is the creature of the bishops, the bishops derive their authority from the pope, and the authority of the pope has come from the devil. Every man, accordingly, who would be a consistent Christian should separate himself from the English church. These positions the reformer avowed himself ready to sustain, at the peril of his life, before king, council, or parliament.* Now it was also, that Burton, the clergyman who was well known as having offended and suffered after the same manner, renewed his censures on the bishops, and demanded, in the most earnest terms, that the state should leave religion to the voluntary action of the people.† Edwards, the notorious Presbyterian zealot, bishop Hall, and Dr. Heylin, wrote in reply to Burton. Many of the people, said Edwards, who do not practically conform to this 'Independent way, are much looking towards it, as being the only way of God.'‡ Great, in consequence, was the effort made both by

* *Come out of her, my People, &c.* Printed 1639. *A Work of the Beast.* 1638.

† *The Protestation Protested; or, a Short Remonstrance, &c.* 1641.

‡ *Reasons against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations, &c.* 1641. P. 24.

BOOK I. Presbyterians and Episcopalians to prevent the diffusion of opinions regarded as so disorganizing. Against the religious toleration demanded by this obnoxious sect, Edwards reasons and declaims at great length, and in the most passionate style. Burton was not a man of measured phrase; but his opponents surpass him in the coarseness of their invective, and in the bitterness of their personalities.*

Combina-
tion against
the Inde-
pendents.

While individuals were manifesting their zeal in this form, we find some of the Presbyterian clergy in the English church combining their strength against the men who were pleading for this self-government of 'particular congregations,' and addressing themselves to the general assembly of the church of Scotland, in the hope of obtaining assistance from that quarter in their endeavours to discountenance and suppress such novelties. The

* *Vindication of the True Sense of the National Covenant, &c. &c.* By John Gere, M.A. 1641. *A Survey of that Foolish, Seditious, Scandalous, Profane Libel, 'The Protestation Protested.'* 1641. 'They [the Independents] may draw away many good people, especially if the ceremonies and the liturgy stand in full force, and their churches tolerated; they will then make brave work in a short time. But *let there be no toleration granted*, and they well stript, and a reformation amongst us in government and ministers, and that fear is over with me.' Edwards's *Vindication, &c.*, 48. The most noisy and turbulent men on this intolerant side, next to Edwards, were Prynne and Bastwick; men whom Laud, by his barbarities, raised from their true level as libellers and bigots, to the rank of patriots and martyrs. It is in the following style that Bastwick raves on this subject:—'The magistrates should remember that they are called pastors: now no godly and faithful pastors will suffer wolves to come into their folds, and worry and destroy their sheep. How diligent ought they to be to keep out these ravenous wolves, though they come in sheep's clothing! But if they should wilfully suffer the corruption of true religion, and *allow of a toleration of all religions*, how would this provoke the Lord to anger against the nations!' *Utter Routing of the Independents and Sectaries*, 596.

assembly expressed its cordial sympathy with their brethren in the south, and their resolve to uphold the polity which required that neither the people nor the officers in any separate congregation should exercise a governing power 'independently,' but always 'with subordination to greater presbyteries and synods, provincial and national.*'

In the meanwhile, such noblemen as Lord Brooke and Lord Say do not hesitate to declare that they go far along with the much-abused Independents in their judgment. Lord Brooke, in his 'discourse opening the nature of that episcopacy which is exercised in England,' describes the primitive bishop as 'a true, faithful "overseer," that over one congregation hath a joint care with the elders, deacons, and the rest of the assembly, who are all fellow-helpers, yea servants, each to other's faith.' The change deemed necessary to the restoration of such an episcopacy was of course the most radical description.† In the judgment of Lord Say, the guilt of separation rested, not with men separating themselves from what is clearly unchristian, but on those who, by their unchristian innovations, make separation necessary. The fault of the most extreme Separatists, in his lordship's view, consisted in their not

Lord
Brooke and
Lord Say.

* *A True Copy of the whole Printed Acts of the General Assemblies,* &c. Printed in 1682.

† *Discourse,* &c. Printed 1641. 'If a man,' says his lordship, 'has tasted and experimentally found the sweetness of peace of conscience, and knows how impossible it is to keep it but by close walking with God, so that he is content to leave friends, living, liberty, all, rather than to break his peace, wound his conscience, sin against God—oh, this man is beyond all rule of reason!—he hath a tang of frenzy; one puffed up into a sort of self-conceit—a rank Separatist!' So opinion was seething, and opposites were preparing for the struggle natural to them.

BOOK I. distinguishing as they should between a *true* church and a *perfect* church—often rashly declaring a church to be no church at all, because it did not happen to be in all respects such as they think a church should be. And certainly there were many who were justly chargeable with that grave oversight.*

Controversy touching non-resistance.

As the matters at issue between the king and the nation came to be submitted to the arbitrament of the sword, it was natural that the right of resistance should come into discussion. In 1642, a treatise was published at York by Dr. Ferne, a royalist divine, in which the patriarchal origin of the monarchy, and the doctrine of non-resistance, were zealously asserted. William Bridge, a clergyman who had just returned from exile in Holland, and had become the pastor of a Congregational church in Yarmouth, replied to Dr. Ferne's book. The doctor rejoined; and in the next year Bridge published a second reply.

Bridge's reply to Ferne.

These writings from the pen of Bridge are interesting, as disclosing the large and philosophical views concerning the nature of government entertained at that juncture by men of his class. The author cites largely from the free and erudite pages of Chancellor Fortescue, showing that the English monarchy, as a matter of law and history, is a limited monarchy; demonstrating, at the same time, from Scripture and reason, that magistracy is an ordinance of God, simply as magistracy,—the form which the office shall assume, and the restrictions that shall be laid upon its action, being left wholly

* *Two Speeches of the Right Hon. William, Lord Viscount Say and Seale, &c.* Printed 1641. Brooke and Say were among the men of mark in England who had meditated parting with their estates, and seeking a new home in America.

with society. In the measure in which civil government is a terror to evil doers and a praise to those who do well, it is of God, and no further. 'The kingdom,' says Bridge, 'is greater than the king, the governed are greater than the government, and the salvation of the greater is the supreme law to which the less everywhere must be subordinate. Jesuits suppose all ecclesiastical power to be lodged in St. Peter, and to pass from him, not to the church, but to the pope and the bishops; and it is only consistent in such reasoners to suppose, that all civil power descends immediately to the king, and to the commonwealth only through him. But enlightened Protestantism and sound reason know nothing of such servile dogmas. God at the first,' continues our sturdy Independent, 'by all we can learn from Scripture, was pleased to appoint magistracy itself, and left men free to set up that form of government which might best correspond with their condition, making the people the first subject and receptacle of civil power. Therefore the prince, or supreme magistrate, hath no more power than is communicated to him by the community, because the effect cannot exceed the virtue of its cause. No community can give away from themselves the power of self-preservation. In case a prince shall neglect his trust so as not to preserve them, but to expose them to violence, it is no usurpation in them to look to themselves, but an exercise of that power which was always their own.'*

* *The Wounded Conscience Cured, &c.* And *The Truth of the Times Vindicated.* By William Bridge, Preacher of God's Word. Mr. Herle published *An Answer to Mised Dr. Hen. Ferne* in 1642; and Jeremiah Burroughes entered the lists with him in 1643: *The Glorious Name of God, &c.* Two Sermons.

BOOK I. Bridge was one of the 'dissenting brethren' in the Westminster Assembly, and from this sample of his reasoning, we may judge in a measure as to the manner in which those brethren acquitted themselves in the discussions which arose there.*

The Independents and the Westminster Assembly.

Baillie's letters show, that from the beginning, the great fear of the Scots, and of their Presbyterian allies in England, had respect to the Independents. The representatives of that party in the Westminster Assembly are admitted to be 'most able men, and of great credit,' especially Thomas Goodwin, Nye, Burroughes, Bridge, Carter, Caryl, Phillips, and Sterry. 'But concerning the difficulty expected from that quarter,' says Baillie, it is agreed, not to meddle with it in haste, 'till 'it please God to advance our army, which we expect 'will much *assist our arguments.*'† In the meanwhile, letters were written to Holland, Zealand, France, and Switzerland, urging, that the reformed churches in those countries should declare themselves against this departure from customs common to them all. To succeed in this object it was thought would be 'a great dash' to the

* On the matter of regal power, the canons passed by the two Houses of Convocation, under the influence of Laud, in 1640, read thus:—
'The most high and sacred order of kings is of divine right, being
'the ordinance of God himself, founded in the prime laws of nature,
'and clearly established by express texts both of the Old and New
'Testaments. For subjects to bear arms against the king, offensive
'or defensive, upon any pretence whatsoever, is at the least to resist
'the powers that are ordained of God; and though they do not in-
'vade, but only resist, St. Paul tells them plainly, they shall receive to
'themselves damnation.' The clergy were to read this canon from the
pulpit on the Lord's day once a quarter, and to admonish the people
that they were 'not to speak of his majesty's power in any other way
than is expressed in this canon.'

† *Letters*, i. 401, 407-410.

‘Independent faction.’ But this covert policy was no secret to that faction. Hence, their memorable ‘Apologetical Narration,’ addressed to the two houses of parliament, and bearing the names of Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes, and William Bridge.

CHAP. IV.

The design of this narrative was to remove misconception, and to correct misrepresentation in regard to the principles and practices of Congregational churches. It is a singularly grave and calm production, seeming scarcely to belong to an age in which the passions of men were so little under control. The writers describe their ecclesiastical position as presenting a middle course between the tendencies towards endless division, as seen in many Separatists, and the rigid policy which found so much favour with the Presbyterians. ‘We have, nearly’ ‘all of us,’ they say, ‘been in the ministry of the English’ ‘church, and becoming voluntarily exiles, that we might’ ‘possess full liberty of worship, we have been in a con-’ ‘dition to look impartially at the whole question of’ ‘church order. We reverence the reformed churches,’ ‘and have not regarded it as any reflection on them to’ ‘suppose, that their first step in the direction of reforma-’ ‘tion has not been such as to leave no place for amend-’ ‘ment or further progress. Good men have learnt’ ‘something since the days of Luther and Calvin; and we’ ‘have presumed to think that it might be given to us’ ‘to learn something more. We follow no party impli-’ ‘citly; we are willing to learn from all or any; however’ ‘widely differing from us. It never entered into our’ ‘hearts to deny that the parochial congregations of Eng-’ ‘land may be true churches, and their ministry a true’ ‘ministry, nor to decline communion with churches,

The Apolo-
getical
Narration.

BOOK I. 'whether at home or abroad, which are not according to our judgment wholly pure. This charity, in which we have always lived, was extended to us in the land of our exile, where all magistrates allowed us, at certain hours on the Lord's-day, the use of their churches, our congregations being convened by the church bell; and not only the wine for our communion, but a liberal maintenance for our ministers, being secured to us by public order. In our worship, we offered free prayer only, not, as in England, free prayer joined with a liturgy. Our ministers, in common with all the reformed churches, are simply presbyters. Our discipline is purely spiritual; and while resting wholly with the congregation and its officers, it does not render the congregation independent in any such sense as to preclude responsibility to the magistrate in our civil relations, or to exempt us from brotherly admonition, and it may be censure and disownment on the part of other churches.*'

* The Rev. Mr. Herle, a Presbyterian licenser of the press, and afterwards Prolocutor of the Assembly, wrote against the *Apologetical Narration*, but nevertheless described it as 'full of peaceableness, modesty, and candour;' and speaking of the party says: 'The difference between us and our brethren who are for Independency, is nothing so great as some may conceive. It is so far from being a fundamental, that it is scarcely a material difference.' But the document was assailed with great virulence by others, especially by Dr. Bastwick and Gangrene Edwards.

The Puritan clergyman, John Goodwin, deserves honourable mention among those who pleaded for toleration at this juncture, and at some cost. He had now become an Independent, and even in that age he dared to avow himself an Arminian. His reasoning against the angry declamation of Edwards and Prynne is admirable. 'If by toleration,' he writes, 'the argument means a non-suppression of such religious sects and schisms, by fining, imprisoning, disfranchising, banishment, death, or the like,—my answer is, that they ought to be tolerated: only upon this supposition—that the professors of them be

Of course, ministers receiving 'maintenance' from the magistrate, even while themselves and their charge were left thus spiritually free, could not be said wholly to have renounced the state-church principle. The doctrinal faith of the pastors and churches, in this case, was substantially that of Protestant Christendom, and their peculiarities in polity and form were not accounted material. So long as this state of things continued, it was possible that the church should remain free and independent, even while aided by the state. But in case of any serious doctrinal or ecclesiastical divergence between the congregation and the civil power, the decision of such congregations would have been to retain their proper liberty, at the cost of surrendering all relation to the magistrate. The magistrate had been thus at issue with them in England, and this was the course they had taken; and this course they would have taken in the same circumstances in Holland. It does not appear to have been seen, that maintenance of religion from the public funds, to be socially equitable, should have been open to all the differences of belief which the public might choose to avow—Socinianism, if not to Romanism, in common with Congregational Protestantism, or Puritan orthodoxy. It is not given to individuals, or to society, to see truth in all its sequences at once. It is a beneficent law which provides, that for a while, men shall see only in part. Revelation comes by little and little, as we are able to bear it.

CHAP. IV.

Hold a remnant of the State-church principle.

'otherwise peaceable in the state.' *Reply of Two Brethren to A. S.* 55. Like most of the Independents at that time, he was willing there should be an established church, but he wished to see it a church of wide latitude, and that there should be a toleration for those who, notwithstanding its latitude, might still prefer not to be of it.

BOOK I.

Contest
between
the Presby-
terians, In-
dependents,
and Eras-
tians.

During the next two years the debates in the Westminster Assembly were many, and sometimes angry. The Presbyterians insisted on the establishment of their system, point by point, and nearly point by point it was more or less resisted—to-day by the Erastians, to-morrow by the Independents, and often by both together. The debate concerning ordination extended over ten days. It was settled on the ground of a slight concession made by the Presbyterian majority, to a powerful minority known to be sustained by a still more powerful influence in parliament. The demand that Presbyterianism should be established as resting on divine right, brought on a discussion which lasted thirty days. During fifteen days the Independents prosecuted their impeachment of that pretension, and during fifteen days they stood upon the defensive. The Erastians denied the divine right plea to any system. The magistrate, it was maintained, was at full liberty to determine all ecclesiastical arrangements according to his discretion. The Independents affirmed, that if a system was to be proclaimed as of divine right because supposed to be deducible from Scripture, then they must be allowed to claim that distinction in behalf of Congregationalism. But they simply prayed that they might be tolerated side by side with Presbyterianism—they did not aim to supplant it. The parliament consented to speak of the Presbyterian polity as according to the word of God, and as proper to be established, but would know nothing concerning its divine right doctrine. Loud was the cry called forth by this decision.*

* The reader has no doubt seen the engraving, from a painting by Mr. Herbert, representing the Independents in the Assembly of Divines as they made their stand there in the cause of religious liberty. Much has been said in some quarters in censure of that representation as not historically truthful. The Independents who spoke there, it is said,

But it was on the tender question of church discipline—or what is technically called ‘the power of the keys’—that the gravest difference arose between the assembly and the parliament. The Presbyterians claimed that the eldership or presbytery should have power to question the disorderly, and to interdict from the communion, or to excommunicate persons deemed liable to such exercises of authority. But the parliament insisted that persons judging themselves aggrieved by any such proceeding should have a right of appeal from the ecclesiastical to the civil power, and an ordinance was passed appointing commissioners in every province to receive such appeals. Great was the offence given by this Erastian policy. According to the language common in Presbyterian publications, and from Presbyterian pulpits, the liberties of the church were gone. The magistrate had thrust himself into the place of the minister, and had bound him hand and foot. The protest which came from the General Assembly in Scotland, condemned everything of this nature that had been done, in strong terms. This document had scarcely been presented to the English parliament, when it was found to be abroad in print, with an anonymous preface. The house so far resented this proceeding, that the papers as thus published were burnt by the hangman. The assembly now presented a

CHAP. IV.

Grand
dispute
concerning
discipline.

did not plead for a full liberty of conscience. The most enlightened of them had something to learn on that subject. True—nevertheless, there they were, a noble advanced guard in relation to the progress of that principle, compelling their Puritan brethren to listen to utterances which were far too free in their spirit to be borne with patience. The majority of the Presbyterians were intent on becoming as inquisitorial and oppressive in their rule as the prelates had been; the Independents in that hall of debate frustrated that policy; and all free-hearted men have been willing to do them honour on that ground.

CHAP. IV. petition to the parliament, in which they complained of the recent measures as an invasion of the freedom essential to all church order. But the petitioners were reminded, that they had been convened by the authority of parliament to give their advice on such questions as should be submitted to them, and on such matters only. In this petition they had passed the limits of their commission, and had exposed themselves to the penalties of a *premunire*. The alarm of the divines was great. The civilians, with a show of moderation, made good use of their advantages. The *jus divinum* dogma was not to be recognized, and the civil power was not to relinquish its control over the ecclesiastical.

The Presbyterians will not tolerate Independency.

But disastrous as was the quarrel between the Presbyterians and the Erastians, their quarrel with the Independents was attended by still more serious results. Among the latter, church discipline rested with the congregation, not with the eldership, and was simply a spiritual affair, having no relation to civil penalties. To a large extent, accordingly, the Independents acted with the Erastians on this question. But the grand point at issue between this party and the Presbyterians concerned liberty of conscience. In the autumn of 1644, a committee was appointed to see if a settlement could not be realized that should comprehend the Independents. Nothing could well be more moderate or reasonable than the course now taken by the Independent party; and nothing more partial, unbrotherly, and unwise, than the conduct of their opponents. After conferences, extending over six months, in which the strong had availed themselves of every advantage against the weak, the Presbyterian divines brought the whole to an end, by declaring, that to grant the liberty claimed by the In-

dependents would be of necessity to grant all sorts of license to other men under the same plea. Independency, accordingly, with its 'great Diana'—liberty of conscience, was denounced from both sides the Tweed as the patron of all heresies and schisms. When matters had come to this pass, the Rev. Jeremiah Burroughes, one of the most moderate and candid men in England, said, in behalf of himself and his brethren:—
CHAP. IV.
'liberty to govern ourselves in our own way, so long as we behave ourselves peaceably towards the civil magistrate, we are resolved to suffer, or to go to some other part of the world where we may enjoy our liberty. While men think there is no way of peace but by forcing all men to be of the same mind, while they think the civil sword a fit ordinance of God to determine all controversies of divinity, and that it must needs be attended by fines and imprisonment to the disobedient, while they apprehend there is no medium between a strict uniformity and a general confusion of all things—while these sentiments prevail, there must be a base subjection of men's consciences to slavery, a suppression of much truth, and great disturbance in the Christian world.'

We shall leave Neal, a Presbyterian historian, to say what is fitting to be said concerning these proceedings:—
'Thus ended the last committee of lords and commons, and of the assembly of divines, for accommodation. Little did the Presbyterian divines imagine, that in less than twenty years all their artillery would be turned against themselves; that they should be precluded the establishment by an act of prelatical uniformity; that they should be reduced to the necessity of pleading for that indulgence which they now denied their brethren;

Neal on the conduct of the Presbyterians.

BOOK I. ' and esteem it their duty to gather churches for separate
 ' worship, out of others, which they allowed to be true
 ' ones. If the leading Presbyterians in the assembly and
 ' city had carried it with temper towards the Independ-
 ' ents, on the footing of a limited toleration, they had, in
 ' all likelihood, prevented the disputes between the army
 ' and parliament, which were the ruin of both; they
 ' might then have saved the constitution, and made their
 ' own terms with the king, who was now their prisoner;
 ' but they were enamoured with the charms of covenant-
 ' uniformity, and the divine right of their presbytery,
 ' which, after all, the parliament would not admit in its
 ' full extent.* Baxter, no friend to the Independents,
 speaks to much the same effect concerning the proceed-
 ings of his brethren at this juncture.†

How the
 Independ-
 ents became
 so strong in
 the army.

We shall now retrace our steps a little, to mark how the Independents, a minority in parliament, outnumbered and thus ungenerously dealt with in the Westminster assembly, became so strong in the army as to rise to the possession of supreme power in the state. As men who had suffered most under the late misrule, they were among the first to seize their weapons, and among the most resolute in wielding them. The oppressions of the last twenty years had greatly increased their numbers.

In the army they made converts rapidly. Every man among them was more or less a polemic. In the intervals between military duty came theological discussions, and often high debate on the comparative merits of Presbyterianism and Independency. In the commencement of the war, Cromwell's regiment of Ironsides

* See *Papers for Accommodation, Grand Debate*, and Neal, iii. 231-265.

† *Life*, 103.

would gladly have received Richard Baxter, a Presbyterian, as their chaplain. But not long afterwards, the pastor of Kidderminster found speculations common among those same men, which had disposed them to look, both as politicians and Christians, much beyond his own more conventional and prudent notions. It was so throughout the army.

Two circumstances contributed specially to this result. 'Drunkards and the rabble,' says Baxter, 'who formerly hated the Puritans, when they saw the war beginning, grew enraged; for if a man did but pray or sing a psalm in his house, they would cry, "Down with the roundheads!" and put them in fear of sudden violence.* The effect of which we are told was, that thousands of religious men, who might otherwise have remained quietly at home, fled to the garrisons of the parliamentarians, and became soldiers.† Such men presented just the kind of material on which the Independents were likely to make their impression. Their work in this respect was greatly facilitated by the circumstance, that after the battle of Edgehill, where the Presbyterian chaplains first saw war, very few such persons followed the army. Preaching thus fell into the hands of the Independents, who were distinguished from the Presbyterians in regarding that function as pertaining to the laity, if supposed to be possessed of the natural qualifications, quite as legitimately as to the clergy. Charles assured his followers at Shrewsbury, that 'they would meet with no enemies but traitors: most of them Brownists, Anabaptists, and Atheists.' If some of these elements were

* *History of Councils*, 92, 93.

† *Life and Times*. Part I. 30. Mrs. Hutchinson gives a similar account, i. 180-219.

BOOK I. not strong in the army at the beginning, it is certain that they were soon to become potent in that quarter.

Source of the political importance of the Independents.

Even in that religious age, the number of persons who might be described as outsiders—as persons having no clearly-defined religious principles, was not inconsiderable. But the circumstances of the times obliged even such men to ally themselves, more or less, with some religious party; and the Independents, from their more tolerant maxims, were the natural object of preference both with the thoughtful and the thoughtless who were in that position. It was largely from this cause that the party comprehended under the name of Independents became suddenly so considerable, not only in the army, but through the kingdom.

Jealousy between the Scotch Covenanters and the Independents.

Hence also the settled jealousy and resentment with which the Independents were regarded by the Scotch Presbyterians. That the 'new heresy,' called 'liberty of conscience,' might be checked; and that the conduct of Cromwell, 'the darling of the sectaries,' and no friend, as it was thought, to the Scottish army, might be under due oversight, the commissioners from the north contrived that one of their countrymen, Major-general Crawford, should be always near that dangerous person. As Cromwell was not ignorant on these matters, the rivalry and dissension between him and Crawford had been manifest, and had been shared considerably by their respective partisans, before the memorable battle of Marston Moor. It was said, and with some truth, that the Scots under Crawford had been more easily routed on that day than brave men should have been; and the Independents not only ventured to remind their brethren of the Covenant of that fact, but attributed the victory which nevertheless followed to

some qualities in their own leader which certain other leaders would do well to emulate.* Crawford and Cromwell brought their accusations against each other before a council of war. Cromwell insisted that Crawford should be dismissed. But the Presbyterian party, especially the chaplains, raised the cry of persecution. The earl of Manchester was disposed to side with that sect; and the result was, a coolness between the earl, who was first in command, and Cromwell, who was next in authority.

In fact, the position of Cromwell at this juncture was one of considerable danger. He had become obnoxious to the Scots, not only from his opinions concerning religious liberty, but on account of language he was said to have used concerning them as a people. The earl of Essex regarded him with suspicion. Manchester admired his genius, but was disquieted when obliged to look him in the face as an opponent. The manner in which the war had been for some while conducted, seemed to baffle all calculation in regard to the time of its continuance, or the terms on which it might be brought to a conclusion. Advantages, when gained, in place of being assiduously improved, had been allowed to pass away, as though something short of necessity would suffice to bring the king to the conditions insisted on by the parliament. His majesty was not to

Circumstances and conduct of Cromwell.

* Baillie is indignant at the doubt cast on the courage of his countrymen; but in his private communications something of this nature is clearly admitted. He congratulates Lord Eglinton on having acquitted himself at Marston Moor 'with so great honour, when so many in cowardice fell in disgrace worse than death. Shame hath fallen on particular men, when they turned their backs who were most obliged and most expected to have stood still.' The first hundred pages in Baillie's second volume are full of allusions to this disagreement in the army, consequent on the growing power of the Independents.

BOOK I.

be vanquished; he was only to be beaten a little more, and then all would be right. Cromwell saw this policy in its true light. His sagacious and ardent nature was not a little irritated by it. There were, accordingly, two points, about which he became much concerned. He wished to see the war pressed to its issue by more vigorous measures. He wished also to see the ecclesiastical intolerance, still so rife in many quarters, brought to an end. The first of these objects was not to be expected from the present commanders. To the second, the Presbyterians, especially those of Scotland, were the grand impediment. The scheme of Cromwell involved an abandonment of the Covenant.*

Cromwell
is assailed in
Parliament.

Cromwell's opponents were now busy in plotting against him. Secret conferences opposed to him were followed by an open denunciation in parliament. He was described as an enemy to the peerage, and as a man wont to utter very seditious language. But these charges could not be sustained. Moreover, the Scotch commissioner, Baillie, a leader in this conspiracy, is obliged to confess, that the Independents in the army under Manchester and Cromwell, and, according to report, in that under Waller, were as two to one, both among officers and men, as compared with the Presbyterians; and they were known to consist, it is said, of 'the far more resolute and confident men for the parliament party.'†

Strength of
the Inde-
pendents.

Proposes the
Self-deny-
ing Ordi-
nance.

Assailed in his place in parliament, Cromwell rose and proposed what has since become so well known under the name of the Self-denying Ordinance. This ordinance, the necessity of which was strenuously urged by Sir Harry Vane, required that no member of either house of parliament should hold any military office after

* Whitelocke, *passim*.

† *Letters*, ii. 5.

a certain day, without a new appointment. The effect of this measure would be to remove Essex and Manchester, who were Presbyterians, but it would not touch Sir Thomas Fairfax, or General Skippon, who were of that persuasion. The upper house did not look with favour on this bill, but it ultimately passed.

CHAP. IV.

On the appointed day, the members of both houses who held commissions resigned them. But Cromwell did not follow their example. Many writers have dwelt on this circumstance as evidence of the craft with which Cromwell removed impediments from the path of his ambition. It is clear, however, that this exception in his own favour was not of Cromwell's seeking. It resulted from incidents which he could not have foreseen, and from influences which were not under his control. The ordinance passed the upper house on the 3rd of April. It was to take effect at the end of forty days. When those days were coming to a close, Cromwell, who had been skirmishing in the neighbourhood of Salisbury, joined the army under Fairfax at Windsor. On the day following, Fairfax received a command from the committee of both kingdoms, requiring that Cromwell should be sent into Oxfordshire, to prevent a junction between a body of cavalry, under the command of Prince Rupert, and the king's army. Cromwell fell upon the prince and his four regiments, near Islip Bridge, and putting them to flight, he slew many, possessed himself of the queen's standard, and returned with about two hundred prisoners. He was then sent to protect the associated counties, the royalists having assembled in considerable force in their neighbourhood. This movement became the more necessary, as the Scots, dissatisfied with recent proceedings, refused to

Cromwell
excepted—
and why.

BOOK I. advance southward. Fairfax was now called from Taunton to watch the motions of the grand army under the king, which had marched in the direction of the midland counties. In prospect of an engagement which might decide this great controversy, the commander was anxious his cavalry should be placed under the command of Cromwell. He wrote to the parliament to that effect. Cromwell was immediately required, by *a vote of the two houses*, to join the grand army near Northampton. He did so on the 13th of June, and on his arrival was greeted with loud acclamations from the soldiers. On the day following the battle of Naseby was fought. The victory of that day was mainly attributable to his capacity and courage. Subsequently, the ordinance was suspended from time to time in his favour.*

Position of
the Inde-
pendents
after the
Battle of
Naseby.

After 'Naseby Fight,' the jealousy with which the Presbyterians regarded the Independents formed the only source of hope to the king. The Oxford parliament had come to an end. About this time, a hundred and fifty new members were added to the lower house at Westminster, in place of those who had withdrawn, or had been declared incapable. By means of these new elections, the Independent members became more nearly equal to the Presbyterians in number. Questions which divided these two parties were often carried by very small majorities. But the Scotch army was still present, and zealous to uphold the Covenant. The majority of the citizens of London continued to be Presbyterians. Such, too, was the feeling with which these parties regarded the growing power of the Independents, that

* Rushworth, vi. 16, 23-25, 30, 34, 37, 39. Whitelocke, 144. The ordinance was dispensed with for a time in favour of several other persons. *Ibid.* 140-146.

they were disposed to enter into almost any compact with the king, rather than accept the generous policy which the once despised, and now hated sectaries were prepared to submit to them.

Charles now sent several messages to the parliament in favour of peace, full of appeals to humanity and religion. During the negotiations which followed, the king was detected in conducting an intrigue with the Irish Catholics. This disclosure left him more than ever powerless.* His majesty made still larger concessions, and three days after making them wrote in the following terms to Lord Digby:—‘ Now, for my own particular resolution. I am endeavouring to get to London, so that the condition may be such that a gentleman may own; and that the rebels may acknowledge me king, being not without hope that I shall be able to draw either the Presbyterians or Independents to side with me for extirpating one another, so that I shall really be king again.’† Everything in the conduct of Charles towards the parties who had been opposed to him con-

Insincerity
of the King.

* The reference in the text is to the commission given to the Earl of Glamorgan. Carte's *Ormond*, iii. 436-440; Rushworth, vi. 239, 240; Lingard, x. 319-325. Clarendon, writing to Secretary Nicolas, expresses himself on this subject in the following terms: ‘ I must tell you I care not how little I say in that business of Ireland, since those strange powers and instructions given to your favourite, Glamorgan, which appears to me so inexcusable to justice, piety, and prudence. And I fear there is very much in that transaction of Ireland, both before and since, that you and I were never thought wise enough to be advised with. Oh! Mr. Secretary, those stratagems have given me more sad hours than all the misfortunes in war which have befallen the king, and look like the effect of God's anger towards us.’ *Papers*, ii. 337. According to Glamorgan, all was done so that ‘ the king might have a starting hole to deny the commission, if excepted against by his subjects.’ *Ibid.* 201, 202, 346.

† Carte's *Ormond*, iii. 452.

BOOK I.

tinued to be of the character thus indicated — utterly selfish and insincere. The Covenanters of Scotland, their Presbyterian friends in England, and the Independents, all were to be duped in their turn, and, if possible, to be so used as to be made to bring upon themselves a common ruin. If the real cause of the end awaiting this misguided king be sought after it will be found in these facts. No man could trust him. Even this grave sin may not have justified sending him to the scaffold, but in the absence of that sin the front of Whitehall would not have witnessed its great tragedy.

Intolerant schemes of the Presbyterians.

Down to May, 1648, the Presbyterians in parliament were strong enough, as we have seen, to carry their memorable bill against blasphemy.* With that party, certainly with their clergy, the great end of the war was to establish their ecclesiastical system after their own fashion. Other ends were manifestly subordinate to that end. With the Independents, the great design of the conflict had been to secure the general liberties of Englishmen, and a special liberty of conscience in the matter of religion. In their zeal for the latter object they never lost sight of the former. Becoming possessed of the person of the king, the Presbyterians flattered themselves it would be easy to disband the army, and to settle all questions in the manner most satisfactory to themselves. The army had given signs of not being likely to submit to such a policy. But the enemies of the sectaries were far from seeing their weakness. The Presbyterian divines had decided that there should be no toleration—not even in the limited measure that would have sufficed to include the Independents. Their brethren in London, emulating their zeal, presented

* See p. 133.

a petition to the two houses, in which they prayed that no person disaffected to the Covenant should be allowed to hold any public trust ; that persons not duly ordained should be no longer suffered to preach ; that all congregations of Separatists should be suppressed ; and that an ordinance should be passed to put down all heresies and schisms, by visiting their abettors with exemplary punishment. The petition further stated, that not to disband the army would be to justify the imputation that those who were in arms had taken to them as a trade, and not from a regard to the public cause. It was urged also that means should be used to bring those persons to merited punishment, who, to serve their own ends, had been acting as firebrands between England and Scotland. This petition, largely signed, was presented by the common council, who accompanied it by another from themselves, in which they pray that all persons in the army, whether officers or privates, who were known to be opposed to the Covenant, should be dismissed, nothing being more easy than to supply the place of such men by others more trustworthy.*

Of course, in the estimation of these 'covenant-engaged citizens,' the greatest among the 'firebrands' alluded to was Oliver Cromwell. It was well known, too, that the men whose heresies and schisms were to be so fittingly punished, were eminently the men who had volunteered to serve their country under the standard of that grand delinquent, many of whom, to the great scandal of their persecutors, had presumed to add the office of preaching to the vocation of the soldier. In not a few of the towns of England there were free congregations, which, by such

CHAP. IV.

May 26,
1646.

* *Tracts of George III.* British Museum. Vol. ccxc. Neal, iv. 276, 308. *Parl. Hist.* iv. 474.

BOOK I.

a course of proceeding, would be brought to a summary dissolution. And by expelling from the army, in the manner proposed, at one swoop, every man, officer or private, who could not pledge himself to the Covenant, the very men by whom they had been themselves delivered from the tender mercies of a government imbued with the spirit of Laud and Strafford would have been dismissed as mere mercenaries. So men who had hazarded the loss of all things in the public interest, were to look on, while folly and bigotry threw away everything which had been realized by sagacity and self-sacrifice.*

Impolicy of the Parliament—disorders from the Covenanters.

Every step taken by the Presbyterians in parliament, at this crisis, tended to send discontent deeper into the ranks of the army. First, the officers were prohibited from petitioning on state questions. Next, the non-commissioned officers and privates, speaking through their newly-formed council of adjutators, were subjected to the same prohibition, in still stronger terms. Opposed to the 'engagement,' by which the army bound itself not to separate until the real objects of the war should be secured, was an instrument signed by the Covenant party

* The officers of the army say, in answer to these reflections: 'We hope that by becoming soldiers we have not lost the capacity of subjects, nor divested ourselves thereby of our interest in the commonwealth; purchasing the freedom of our brethren we have not lost our own.' *Vindication of the Officers of the Army under Sir Thomas Fairfax*. Rushworth, vi. 469, 470. 'Many complaints and cavils were made against the officers and soldiers in the army, as holding erroneous and schismatical opinions, contrary to true doctrine; and that they took upon them to preach and expound Scripture, not being learned or ordained; those who were lately in the highest esteem and respect, as freers of their country from servitude and oppression, are now, by the same people, looked upon as sectaries—thus we see the inconstancy of the giddy multitude.' Whitelocke's *Mem.* 240.

in the metropolis. From that party a petition, hostile to the Independents, was presented to the house. The petitioners were told that their wishes should be taken into consideration on the following morning. But their impatience could not brook even so short a delay. Crowds, including military men, boys, and apprentices, gathered round the edifice, thronged its avenues, and, while some held open the doors, others rushed in, and, with their hats on, continued to shout 'Vote! vote!' To satisfy the insurgents, a vote which had been recorded against the 'city engagement,' and another concerning the city militia, were rescinded. The common council, to whose secret or indirect influence these excesses were mainly attributable, succeeded in restoring order. But they had no sooner retired, than another body of rioters forced their way into the house, and compelling the speaker to resume the chair after an adjournment, obliged the members present to declare that measures should be forthwith taken to bring the king to London.*

That the army should come to London, and that the government should pass virtually into its hands, were only the natural sequences to such a course of events. What follows from this point exhibits a new phase in this memorable drama. We have seen something of what England was under the rule of Charles,—assisted by Strafford and Laud; we have seen also what it became when a new ecclesiastical element rose into prominence, known as Covenanted-Presbyterianism; and we have now traced the growth of a third power, which never loses sight of the great principles of civil liberty, and is intent, beyond any other that has preceded

England as
a Common-
wealth.

* Rushworth, vi. 557-644. *Commons' Journals*, June 6 to July 26. Whitelocke, 251-263. Ludlow, 171-178.

BOOK I.

it, on protecting the religious conscience against civil penalties. To this last power—the power of the Independents—rising, as we have seen, from small beginnings, the parliament has been indebted for its success in the field; and during the next ten years it is this power which will be ascendant both in the field and in the government. Many influences contributed to bring about the changes we have described; but every intelligent man will be aware that the victories of Marston Moor and Naseby, of Dunbar and Worcester, were victories of the Independents, and that without the Independents England would not have seen her Commonwealth. It is cognate, accordingly, to the purpose of this volume, that we should endeavour to realize a just conception of the condition of England, when Cromwell, and the men faithful to Cromwell, were in possession of the supreme authority.

Disaffection
of the Pres-
byterians
under the
Common-
wealth.

The English Commonwealth came from the utter distrust of the king on the part of the men who had resisted his will, and from the consequent state of opinion and feeling in the army. It is not probable that the Presbyterians would have made good republicans under any circumstances; but it was not possible that a republic which owed its origin so largely to the Independents, and their kindred sectaries, should have commended itself to their approval. Hence the history of the Presbyterians under the Commonwealth and the Protectorate is, for the most part, the history of disaffection—often of the most bitter disaffection. They commonly refused to take any oath of fidelity to the existing government. Contrary to the custom of the age, the ordinances of the parliament were not read from their pulpits. They would not observe the days

of fasting or thanksgiving appointed by authority. CHAP. IV.
They were known to be in frequent communication with the Scots and with Charles II. Even Baxter denounced the invasion of Scotland, and employed his eloquence to dissuade the soldiers from engaging in it. Had the battle of Worcester been in favour of the invaders, the Presbyterian clergy would have hailed the event as a merciful providence.

The parliament condescended to reason with these infallible theologians, promising them security in their parishes and emoluments, and everything which reasonable men could expect. But they did so to small purpose.* They could not promise that the civil power should cease to be superior to the ecclesiastical. Nor could they promise that such liberty of conscience as had been demanded by the Independents should be condemned as fraught with error and evil; and in the absence of such concessions it availed little what else was conceded. In a document issued by the officers of the army, intitled 'The Agreement of the People,' promises to the above effect were made. But it was added by the authors of that instrument, that 'all who profess faith in 'God, by Jesus Christ, however differing in judgment 'from the doctrine, discipline, and worship publicly 'held forth, shall be protected in the profession of 'their faith and exercise of their religion, according 'to their consciences, so as they abuse not this liberty, 'to the injury of others, or the disturbance of the public 'peace.' We need not say that these were noble words. But a synod of fifty-nine Presbyterian ministers refused to sign this paper, partly because they disapproved the political change which it contemplated, and partly

* *Parl. Hist.* iii. 1324.

BOOK I. because its scheme of toleration would entail great mischiefs.*

One effect of this policy on the part of the Presbyterians was, that the Independents were placed in greater prominence by the government than they would otherwise have been, not only as possessors of livings in the church, but as holding places of chief trust and honour in the universities.

Commissioners for the examination of ministers—the Triers.

Cromwell, on becoming Protector, deemed it imprudent to leave the examination and introduction of ministers to cures wholly in the hands of the Presbyterians. In March, 1653, a body of commissioners were appointed by the Protector and his council to be a permanent committee for such purposes. This commission consisted of thirty-nine persons. Nine were laymen. The remainder were ministers, including Presbyterians and Independents, and two or three Baptists. Before a person nominated to a benefice could be admitted, it was necessary that he should be ‘judged and approved’ by this commission, as being ‘able and fit to preach the gospel, for the grace of God in him, for his holy and unblameable conversation; as also for his knowledge and utterance.’ No candidate was to be rejected, unless nine at least of the commissioners should be present. This body sat in London. Three years later a second commission was issued, which gave existence to a similar authority in every county of England and Wales, the committees consisting in this case, as in the former, partly of laymen and partly of ministers. But the province of these county committees was not simply to examine persons seeking

* Toleration was distributed poison—‘soul murder.’ Neal, iii. 276, 328; iv. 8. *Nonconformist’s Plea*, 4.

admission to cures, but to hear complaints against such as were already in possession of them, and to eject all incumbents found to be 'scandalous, ignorant, or insufficient.' In cases of scandal, any five of a committee might pronounce judgment, the proof being given on oath 'by two credible witnesses, or by one witness, with other concurrent evidence.' In deciding on cases of alleged 'ignorance or insufficiency,' ten commissioners were to be present, five of whom were to consist of ministers in the commission; and the evidence in such cases also was to be on oath. Cromwell's 'Triers,' so notorious in the history of those times, comprehended both these commissions.*

The council, in naming the persons to be entrusted with this responsibility, appear to have acquitted themselves with judgment and fairness. The names of noblemen and gentlemen, and of well-known ministers in the different counties, were generally such as to show that the intentions of the government were intelligent and just. Complaint against the authority on which these things were done is futile. The times were such, that almost everywhere the regular had given place to the irregular; old law to new necessity. If anything valuable in the social state of England is to be saved, it must be by special means adapted to such special cir-

* Scobel's *Acts*, 279, 280, 335-347. It should be remembered, that in the year in which these county committees were formed, a special order was issued, which stated that many of the clergy who had been sequestered on the ground of disaffection, pleading the Act of Indemnity in 1651, had contrived to possess themselves of cures without giving satisfaction as to their 'conformity and submission to the government.' The council enjoin, accordingly, that inquiry shall be made concerning such persons, and the promise and evidence of fidelity demanded from them. *Ibid.* 365, 366.

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cumstances. The vices, defects, and irregularities which were to be censured by these commissioners, are largely enumerated; and if some of the faults named were small compared with others, we have no reason to suppose that the lighter matters, when existing alone, were often regarded as a sufficient ground for sequestration.* Many who sought induction to livings sought in vain; but it does not appear that the number of ministers ejected by the Triers was considerable. It is in respect to these commissioners under Cromwell, that Baxter speaks when he says, that if some of them ‘were too severe against all that were Arminians, and too particular in inquiring after evidence of sanctification in those whom they examined, and somewhat too lax in their admission of unlearned and erroneous men that favoured Antinomianism or Anabaptism; yet, to give them their due, they did abundance of good to the church. They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, and drunken teachers; that sort of men who intended no more in the ministry than to say a sermon, as leaders say their common prayers, and so

* The commission mention gross immorality and errors which were to be censured, and some lesser offences. Among the latter we find the using of the Book of Common Prayer. Great complaint has been made that such an act should have been placed in such company. One of the intolerant measures which brought discredit on the Long Parliament in its later years, was the ordinance which prohibited the use of the Prayer Book even in private houses. Lord Macaulay’s picture of the effect of that law *might* have been a reality if the English Puritans had been Spanish Inquisitors. It was an odious law, difficult to enforce, and little heeded. But Cromwell’s prohibition had respect to such clergymen as ‘have *publicly* and *frequently* read or used the ‘Common Prayer Book since the 1st of January last.’ In other words, it had respect to men who had used the desk of the state church as the place in which to violate the law, and to defy the government. Scobell’s *Acts*, 97, 98, 340.

‘patch up a few good words together to talk the people
‘asleep with on Sunday, and all the rest of the week go
‘with them to the ale-house.’* CHAP. IV.

That the decisions of these authorities should fill many a circle with bitter complaints was inevitable, and some of those complaints were not without foundation. But there were instances in which cases of great hardship and injustice seemed to be clearly made out, which were shown to consist of representations far from trustworthy. And in other cases, we need to hear both sides before we can judge safely in relation to them.† Mr. John Goodwin complained of the office of the Triers as an invasion of the rights of the people, who should be allowed to choose their own ministers. But when Congregationalists, after the manner of Mr. Goodwin, become so inconsistent as to accept office in a state church, it is folly to expect that the authority which guarantees the stipend will be content to do that, and nothing more. In such relations, state assistance must always mean state dependence; and if the state was to concern itself at all about the sort of religion to be

* *Life*, 72.

† In Berkshire, the Triers seem to have consisted wholly of laymen, and do not appear to have included a single person of any position. They are said to have cast out some very worthy men on slight pretences, and were about to eject Dr. Pococke, Professor of Arabic in Oxford, on the ground of *insufficiency*! Dr. Owen wrote to Secretary Thurlow, urging that these proceedings should be stayed; and went from Oxford, with several of his friends, to the next meeting of the commissioners. The doctor rebuked the men who were making such use of their authority, and saved the professor. As this, however, was a case in which the lay judges must, as we have seen, have called in at least five clerical commissioners, it is not very probable that they could have succeeded in perpetrating their intended folly. Similar to the conduct of Owen in behalf of Pococke was that of John Howe in behalf of Fuller. Orme's *Life of Owen*, 154, 155. Rogers's *Life of Howe*, 107.

BOOK I. sustained by its means, we do not see what better course the Protector could have taken in his circumstances.*

We have read the language in which the army announced its doctrine of religious toleration in 'The Agreement of the People.' Cromwell and his friends expressed themselves afterwards in the same terms on that subject, in the 'Instrument of Government.' But the parliament, in its deliberations on that document, insisted that the free exercise of religion promised to all classes who 'profess faith in God by Jesus Christ,' should be understood as having respect to such persons only as were agreed concerning the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. Cromwell did not mean

* *The Triers, or Tormentors, Tried and Cast.* Printed 1657. Among the Presbyterians, men were ordained by ministers to the work of the ministry irrespective of any relation to a particular cure. But with the Independents, ordination was always ordination to some accepted charge. In the former case, the act was the joint act of the district presbytery. In the latter, it was commonly left to such ministers from the neighbourhood, or from a distance, as were invited by the church and the minister to take part in it. In all cases regard was paid to the wishes of the people, especially among the Independents. In the case of the great town and city parishes, and in most instances, a call from the people was the main preliminary to a settlement. Newcome's *Autobiography*, 17, 18. Scobell's *Acts*, 172. Mr. Oliver Heywood's settlement at Coley in 1650 was purely a transaction between himself and the congregation, without any reference to patron or minister. Hunter's *Life of Heywood*, 69, 70. But such cases were exceptional. Through all those times the possessors of advowsons continued, in ordinary circumstances, to nominate persons to the vacant livings in their gift. During the civil war, indeed, many patrons were in arms, and the power to make any such nomination effectual had passed from them. But in general, down to 1660, the right of presentation went along with the other rights of property. Presentation, however, did not ensure admission. The local presbytery, where it existed, more commonly committees of examination appointed by the government, came into the place of the bishop and

that his language should be so interpreted. He wished to see toleration extended to those making that profession, 'though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, or discipline publicly set forth.' But in this manner the delicate question was raised—what are fundamentals?

A committee of fourteen divines was appointed to confer and to report on that matter. The committee included some of the leading Independents, and quite an equal number of Presbyterians. Baxter informs us, that when he met the committee he was 'under great weakness and soporous, or scotomatical from illness in his head.' Whether from that cause, or some other, it is clear from his own account that he was hard to please,

his assistants. It rested with them to judge, not concerning the legal title, but concerning the official qualifications of the person presented. If rejected by the examining body, or on reasonable grounds by the people, the patron was expected to present some one more eligible. The minister being once inducted, the tithes or other means of income belonging to the cure were to be paid to him, and they were so paid, except in the case of some Independents who were content to receive the voluntary contributions of their parishioners. Had the government shown a disposition to control the teaching or discipline of the Congregationalists, there would soon have been signs of revolt. But so long as their independence was respected, they were so far Conformists. Some of them appear to have seen that this was a course hardly consistent with their principles, and were reconciled to it only by looking on the existing state of things as special and transitional. Others were Congregationalists of the New England type, believing that government may have something to do with religious matters if you can only ensure that it shall be itself Christian. Like many moderns, they did not seem to see, that to admit the principle of government action in respect to religion at all, is, according to equity and sound reasoning, to admit it universally, and to become parties to the frightful evils which history presents as the fruit inseparable from it. Scobell's *Acts*, Part i. 74, 75, 129, 139, 142, 146; Part ii. 180, 335-347. Lightfoot's *Journal of the Assembly of Divines*, a record of historical value, but from a pen not favourable to the Independents.

BOOK I. especially when opposed to Dr. Owen. Before the committee could agree upon its conclusions the parliament was dissolved; and the labours of the divines were without effect. The articles adopted by them were sixteen in number. They embraced little more than will be found in the Apostles' creed: but while they passed over the points at issue between Calvinists and Arminians, they were explicit in exhibiting the Trinity, and the tenets usually connected with it, as among the essential doctrines. Still, what the essential doctrines of Christianity were, was one thing, and what the religious opinions were which should be in any way tolerated, was another. When the first of these points should be settled, the second would remain to be considered. But the decision of the parliament, in common with the majority of the committee, would no doubt have been, that toleration should not be extended to the open profession of Romanism or of Socinianism.*

Large views
of Crom-
well con-
cerning
religious
liberty.

Cromwell's views were much larger. When dismissing this parliament he complained of the want of liberality on this subject. 'How proper is it,' he says, 'to labour for liberty, that men should not be trampled on for their consciences. Have we not lately laboured under the weight of persecution, and is it fitting, then, to sit heavy upon others? Is it ingenuous to ask liberty, and not give it? What greater hypocrisy than for those who were oppressed by the bishops to become the greatest oppressors themselves so soon as their yoke is removed? I could wish that they who call for liberty now also, had not too much of that spirit if the power were in their hands. As for profane persons, blasphemers, such as

* Baxter's *Life*, 197-205.

‘preach sedition, contentious railers, evil speakers, who seek by evil words to corrupt good manners, and persons of loose conversation, punishment from the civil magistrate ought to meet with them. Because if these pretend conscience, yet walk disorderly, and contrary to natural light, they are judged of all, and their sins being open make them the subjects of the magistrate’s sword.’*

So far as possible, the administration of Cromwell was regulated by such maxims. He ruled freely and generously, to the utmost extent consistent with the temper of the age, and with the security of the great interests represented in his person. His own safety, and the safety of the measure of freedom which he was desirous of preserving to the nation at large, were dependent on his retaining a firm hold on the supreme power. To have allowed that power to pass into the hands of any one of the parties opposed to him, would have been to surrender himself, and all beside, to a rule which must have been a change immeasurably for the worse. Cavalier royalists, Presbyterian royalists, and the stern and fanatical Republican party, were all alike bent on the possession of exclusive power. The course of the Protector towards his parliaments, and towards the religionists of his time, was intended to prevent the coming in of any such power. To his clear perception, and large heart, nothing was more obvious than that the alternative before the country was, either that all parties must cede something for the sake of a common interest and a general settlement, or that some one party, to use his own expression, would be sure to get into the saddle, and to ride the rest at pleasure. All his efforts were directed towards bringing about a wise and equitable

* *Parl. Hist.* iii. 1469.

BOOK I. — compromise, and so to preclude the base servitude inseparable from the other alternative. But the nation was not to comprehend him. Faction was to prove stronger than patriotism. The natural consequences were to follow.*

* The following extracts are not all cited for the first time, but it is proper to give them a place here: 'It is certain,' says Bishop Kennet, 'that the Protector was for liberty, and the utmost latitude to all parties, so far as consisted with the peace and safety of his person and government; and even the prejudice he had against the Episcopal party was more for their being royalists than for their being of the good old church. Dr. Gunning, afterwards Bishop of Ely, kept a conventicle in London, in as open a manner as the Dissenters did after the toleration, and so did several other Episcopalian divines.' *Complete History of England*, iii. 223. A clergyman after the Restoration writes: 'I can reckon up many clergy who had livings in Cromwell's day in the city, and preached without any let. There were Dr. Hall, Dr. Ball, Dr. Wilde, Dr. Harding, Dr. Griffith, Dr. Pierson, Dr. Mossome, and many more, beside abundance in the country.' *Conformists' Plea for the Nonconformists*. Dr. Bates, the physician, a zealous royalist, writes: 'The Protector indulged the use of the Common Prayer in families and in private conventicles; and though the condition of the Church of England was but melancholy, yet it will not be denied that they had a great deal more favour and indulgence than under the parliament; which would never have been interrupted had they not insulted the Protector, and forfeited their liberty by their seditious practices and plottings against his person and government.' See also *Baxter's Life*, 86, 87. *Evelyn's Diary*, ii. 6, 62, 66, 68, 99. *Neal*, iv. 72, 92, 124, 125. Prynne makes it a charge against Cromwell, that he lodged Sir Kenelm Digby, a Catholic, in Whitehall, and that 'he suspended penal laws against Romish priests, and protected several of them under his hand and seal.' *True and Perfect Narrative*, &c. Printed 1659. On John Biddle, the persecuted father of English Unitarianism, Cromwell settled a pension of a hundred crowns a year. Cromwell issued a severe declaration against the Episcopal clergy in 1655, forbidding such of them as had been sequestered from administering any of the rites of their church in private, and from officiating as schoolmasters or private tutors. This measure came immediately after the rising in the west under Penruddock, Wagstaff, and Grove. In that event the Protector

But the effect of the great struggle, which, after a while, passed into the hands of Cromwell, and which rose to its height under his guidance, was to give existence to a chapter in English history never to be forgotten. So far as his will was concerned, men acquitting themselves peaceably knew themselves to be safe. And if the severe Puritan theology of that day finds but a partial acceptance in our time, the religious and social elevation which resulted from it was of a high order. The pious Philip Henry may be taken as an impartial and a safe witness on this subject. Of him we find it written, that 'He would sometimes say, that during saw neither a grateful nor a hopeful return for the comparative lenity of his administration. Usher waited upon him, and urged that the proclamation should be recalled. Such a course was not likely to be taken; but it appears to have been understood, that the obnoxious instrument would not be often, if at all, acted upon, and such was the result. It had been a bad usage in our history down to that time, to make laws so severe on some matters, that the legislators themselves did not expect to see them more than partially enforced. That this law was pretty much a dead letter from the beginning, and that the clergy exercised the sort of liberty as teachers which it prohibited without molestation between 1640 and 1660, is manifest from the language of Mr. Sergeant Charlton when addressing Charles II., on behalf of the commons, in support of a clause in the Act of Uniformity which really did what the Protector only threatened to do. By that act, any person acting as schoolmaster or tutor without licence from a bishop was made liable to fine, imprisonment, &c. 'The reason of this provision,' said the sergeant, 'is, that the commons observed 'the force of education was great; for so many of the nobility and 'gentry found in the Long Parliament differing from the Church of 'England did (as was conceived) arise from that root.' He then says, 'It was an oversight in the usurped powers that they took no care in this 'particular, whereby many young persons were well seasoned in their 'judgments as to the king.' *Lords' Journals*, May 7, 1662. Evelyn's Diary shows that royalists were little influenced by the order of the parliament forbidding the private use of the church service. *Harlean Miscellany*, v. 249. *Mercurius Politicus*, No. 255, p. 5774.

CHAP. IV.
Religion
between
1640-1660.

BOOK I.

‘ those years, between forty and sixty, though on civil
 ‘ accounts there were great disorders, and the foundations
 ‘ were out of course, yet in the matters of God’s worship
 ‘ things went well ; there was freedom and reformation,
 ‘ and a face of godliness upon the nation, though there
 ‘ were those that made but a mask of it. Ordinances
 ‘ were administered in power and purity ; and though
 ‘ there was much amiss, yet religion, at least in the
 ‘ profession of it, did prevail. This, saith he, we know
 ‘ very well, let men say what they will of those times.’*

No doubt there were many things ‘ amiss,’ but the religious faith of the English Puritans was that of the men who had given existence to the Protestantism of Christendom. In the main, they embraced the same creed, and to the same ends. They believed in a Trinity ; in an Atonement as the medium of forgiveness ; and in a spiritual life as to be realized by a Divine Influence. These were the root conceptions of their faith, however variously they might express themselves, and whatever follies they might cluster about them. They all believed in the presence and agency of a divine power around them ; and not less in the reality of a divine action within them, giving them religious thought and religious feeling which they could not otherwise have possessed. To account the Presbyterians at Westminster, or the Independents at Naseby or Dunbar, as fanatics, because they believed in a God as the great ruler in the affairs of the world and in the hearts of men, is to betray strange ignorance, or something worse. In such faith, Catholics and Anglo-catholics, Presbyterians and Independents, were alike agreed. We find such men as Jeremy Taylor, Evelyn, and Clarendon,

* *Life of Philip Henry.* Edited by Sir Bickerton Williams, 54.

constantly recognizing the hand of the Deity in their private affairs, and in the public events which interested them. Nevertheless, our literature relating to the twenty years which preceded 1660, is flooded with representations which seem to assume that faith in such convictions belongs only to the visionary or the hypocrite. Nor do we find these shallow assumptions anywhere so prominent as in the writings of men who affect to be the most philosophical in their speculations. According to Evelyn, it was the Ruler of the universe who allowed him to fall into the hands of highwaymen when travelling through Kent, and to suffer so much, and no more, from their lawlessness. His life, he tells us, had been full of such merciful deliverances.* His friends, Jeremy Taylor and Clarendon, would have commended his piety in giving such expression to his gratitude. According to Clarendon, it was the interposition of Heaven which prevented Cromwell assuming the title of king, and which opened the way so wonderfully for the return of the Stuarts. Need we wonder, then, at the faith in providence, and in spiritual influences, which lived in the hearts of religious people through this land in the middle of the seventeenth century?

No one denies that there were occasional follies and excesses among religious people in those days. The movements which had called the existing tendencies into prominence, had all been reactions, and it is in the nature of reactions that they should be more or less exaggerations. The early Puritans were a reaction against Romanism. The later Puritans were a reaction against an Anglo-catholic scheme of doctrine and worship. The Independents were a reaction against the

* *Diary*, ii. 56-58.

BOOK I.

more rigid Presbyterians. What followed was what might have been expected to follow. An extreme sacerdotalism had produced another extreme. So in regard to preaching. Elizabeth did all she could to depress the power of the pulpit. Her policy in this respect was approved by her successors. But the time came in which the office of preaching was to be restrained no longer, and in which it comes into a great, and perhaps an undue, prominence. So with regard to spiritual influences. Since the early times of the Reformation, the letter, with many Protestants, had come into the place of the spirit; the outward form into the place of the inward life. And now the true doctrine is not only revived, but we may discover in it tendencies towards a dreamy and mystical extravagance. But what is the chaff to the wheat?

New social position of England from resistance to the Stuarts.

In its social position, England became another country when her sons resolved that submission to the weak and degrading policy of the house of Stuart should come to an end. The great change then initiated had respect to the civil liberties of the nation, in common with the ecclesiastical. But it began with religious men, and it continued to be in the hands of such men until it reached its advanced stage under Cromwell. It was a grand protest against priestly and kingly dictation, and it came mainly from the religious conscience in the people.

Relation of this change to the Independents.

It should be observed, too, that the party in which the demand for liberty of conscience was the most enlightened and earnest became the most powerful, and was eminently the party to show the elevation to which a depressed people may be raised when intelligence and feeling in that form come to be strong within them. From the religious conscience in the Independents, came

the victories of Marston Moor and Naseby, of Dunbar and Worcester, together with the high and successful foreign policy of Cromwell. The majority of the Presbyterians were sincere and devout men; but from the beginning, their religious zeal was not adequately allied with civil discretion, and it became much less so as their exclusive pretensions in ecclesiastical affairs began to be questioned by the sectaries. The Independents had always been men of a freer order of thought than the Puritans; and as they rose in power, and their responsibilities widened by their coming into the place of the Presbyterians, their attention to questions of civil policy became characterized in a high degree by a broad intelligence and a manly self-reliance. Ignorance and fanaticism might be found among them, both in the army and elsewhere. But compared with their contemporaries, they were men of large and bold thinking; and they were ready to brave anything, at any moment, in defence of their convictions.* The fact that they had

* We have all heard of the man in Cromwell's first parliament, who, after a quaint tendency not unknown in those days, was named 'Praise-God.' Barebon, his surname, to make the ridiculous name complete, has been read Barebone, and the parliament has been called Barebone's Parliament. The intention has been, by means of these terms, to convey the impression that this 'Little Parliament' was made up of fanatics with such names. It is a pity to spoil so much successful fooling. But if the reader will be at the trouble to look down the list of names borne by the men of that parliament, he will see that they are as free from any oddity of that kind, as the same number from a modern house of peers would be found to be on comparison. Of a piece with the truthfulness of such history is the story of a whole jury characterized by such names. It was natural that Hume should make his use of such inventions. Lord Macaulay should have known better; and when his lordship attempted to write poetry on such a topic it was only fitting that his genius should break down.

BOOK I.

to a large extent outgrown the small conventionalities of Puritanism, and had learnt to subordinate trivial things to greater, was evinced in the case of many among them, even in their dress. One Presbyterian authority, the most scurrilous writer of his age, says of them: 'They go in such fine fashionable apparel, and wear such long hair, as 'tis a shame. They feast, ride journeys, and do servile business on the fast days.'* Another scribe of the same order writes, 'You shall find them the only gallants in the world, so that one who should meet them would take them for roarers and ruffians, rather than saints. You shall find them with cuffs, and those great ones, at their heels, and more silver and gold on their clothes than many great persons have in their purses.'†

The truth is, the leaders of the Independents were most of them men of good family, and of good education, and the rational interpretation of the above language is, that, to the credit of their good sense, they were accustomed to dress as such men might have been expected to dress. But it must not be concluded from these descriptions that the Independents were really a less religious people than the stricter sect among the Presbyterians. Baxter's complaint against them, once and again, is, not that they were lax in their discipline, or indifferent about the evidence of spiritual life in their communicants, but the reverse. Propriety in 'externals,' which satisfied the Presbyterians, did not satisfy the Independents. Philip Henry commends them on this ground. After the manner of Cromwell and Milton, they succeeded in combining a grave

* Edwards's *Gangræna*, Part ii. 62.

† Bastwick's *Utter Routing of the Independents*.

and earnest religious life, with a large and high-minded patriotism. CHAP. IV.

With the rise of this new power, came a revival of that military reputation which Englishmen had sustained so memorably from the Conquest to the death of Elizabeth. During the reign of James I., the nation which had shown itself strong on the side of Protestantism and freedom over Europe, and which had presented so bold a front to the Armada, seemed suddenly to have lost all its capacity for enterprise, and even its hereditary courage. In the early years of Charles I., the foreign policy of this country again became warlike; but the result was only to confirm the most unfavourable impressions existing among our neighbours. Our old sagacity and spirit were supposed to have passed from us. Our part in the affairs of Christendom for the time to come, it was said, would be of a very humble and harmless description.

England degraded in the eyes of Europe by James and Charles.

But the foreign war to which Charles and his favourite committed themselves was selfish and insincere. It was known to be of that character by those employed in prosecuting it, and by the nation at large. Hence the force raised consisted of men drawn from the lowest class, without the least feeling of interest in the service. Those who should have supplied the means were slow to furnish them. Money ill obtained was ill spent. England became a broken reed to her friends, and a derision to her enemies. The returned soldiers of the great duke were thrown abroad over the country in homelessness, nakedness, and want. In the face of such signs of dishonour men might well blush to bear the name of Englishmen.*

* There are many Letters in the State Paper Office relating to

BOOK I.
 Outburst of
 military
 greatness.

But a change was not distant. The English were about to become a braver and a more potent people in the estimation of Europe than they had been since the days of the Plantagenets. The interests involved in the civil war were such as to move the thought and passions of the highest and the lowest, and especially of the wisest and the best. The armies of the civil war consisted, for the most part, of men called immediately from their peaceful occupations in city or country life. But these men are no sooner assembled than they become disciplined, and capable, in an extraordinary degree, of cool and steady action, either in the open field or in the breach. The royalists, who were proud of their blood and breeding, soon became aware that it would not be safe to assume that men accounted their inferiors in these respects, must be their inferiors in military skill or courage. 'Our ranks,' said Cromwell, must not be filled up with serving men and tapsters,' but with men whose religion and principle shall ensure a discipline and daring not inferior to the qualities of that nature among 'the sons of gentlemen who are opposed to them.' His own regiment of horse consisted of such men, and became the model to which the army was gradually conformed. Clarendon expresses his admiration of the parliamentary infantry in the first battle of Newbury, who, though raw from the streets of the capital, were seen to stand together like a wall of adamant in the face of the most resolute onsets from the royalist cavalry. In 1656, Cromwell sent six thousand of his veterans to be engaged with the army of the king of France in the siege of Dunkirk. The Spanish

this subject, which more than justify all that is said above, and of which I hope to make a fuller use on another occasion.

army, under Don John of Austria, and the Prince of Condé, advanced to the relief of the place. Turenne, the greatest general of the age, began to think of raising the siege. The English urged a different course. In the battle which ensued, the immortal six thousand, as they were called, drove one wing of the enemy from the field, and then, after their manner at Marston Moor and Naseby, wheeled round, fell upon the rear of the main body, and made the victory complete. In the regiment under Lockhart, the English commander, there was scarcely an officer without a wound. But so the military dishonour which had been brought upon us by Stuart weakness was wiped away.*

With this revival of military greatness, came an outgrowth, hardly less signal, of naval power. The Dutch, from a relationship by marriage to the royal family, and, in part, perhaps, from commercial jealousy, were disposed to look coolly on the new republic. But some leading men in the English parliament had given much attention of late to maritime affairs, and were willing to try their strength with the Hollanders, and to do something towards checking the pretensions of that power to the sovereignty of the seas. The States began to look on these appearances with some apprehension. To propitiate the men whom they had done so much to offend,

CHAP. IV.

Our maritime power under the Commonwealth.

* Ludlow says the English suffered most from a party of cavaliers under the Duke of York, who 'galled them from a sandhill;' and adds, that when dislodged from that position their bravery was not equal to that of the Spaniards. *Mem.* ii. 108, 109. Thurloe, vii. 151. Clarendon, vii. 280-284. Sir William Temple's *Mem.* Part iii. 154. During the engagement, the Duke of York betrayed that sympathy with English blood which, amidst all his faults, was never to forsake him, by applauding the brave and masterly conduct of his countrymen.

BOOK I. they now descended to urge that certain negotiations which they had abruptly terminated at the Hague might be renewed in London. But they were too late. English vessels swept a hundred Dutch traders into English ports, as a compensation against alleged losses. What was much more serious, the memorable navigation act was passed, which inflicted a blow on the great carrying trade of the United Provinces from which they never recovered. One grand naval engagement now followed another, with what result may be inferred from the fact, that the concessions made by the Dutch for the sake of peace were such as filled Europe with astonishment.*

Jamaica now became an English settlement. The Londoners saw the silver taken in a rich Spanish fleet conveyed in a stream of waggons to the Tower. Blake appeared before Leghorn, and exacted 60,000*l.* from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, as the penalty of having allowed Prince Rupert to sell his prizes in that port, and of having obliged certain English vessels to leave it, which were in consequence taken by the Dutch. From Leghorn the English admiral sailed to Algiers, and extorted a pledge from the dey, that no violence should be done to the property or persons of the English. Blake next appeared before Tunis. The Moslem governor bid him look at the guns of Galetta and Ferino, and be gone. Blake opened his fire on those fortresses, laid them in ruin, and destroyed nine ships of war in the harbour. News of this achievement soon fled to Tripoli, and disposed the authorities of that place to comply at once with the terms which Blake had been instructed to submit to them. No marvel, if

* Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique Universel*, Tom. vi. p. ii. 74, *et seq.* Thurloe, i. 570, *et seq.*; ii. 9-197, *passim.*

France and Spain bid high against each other to win the alliance of a power which could acquit itself after this manner. No marvel if the power of Cromwell sufficed to stay the butcher-hand of the subjects of the Duke of Savoy in their work of persecution. England is in her right place again—soundly Protestant, and known everywhere as the potent friend of the Protestant.

CHAP. IV.

The industry of the country rose with its general temper. Lawless taxation and government monopolies, so much to the mind of James and Charles, were not favourable to commerce. With the civil war disturbance came into everything. But on the settlement of the Commonwealth, the national energy manifested itself in this direction. The adventures of private merchants became more common. The English woollen trade revived greatly, both in the Netherlands and in Germany. In France, manufactures and trade were mostly in the hands of Protestants. In England they were mostly in the hands of Puritans, and of other religious men in towns and cities. Hence the commercial industry of the country was with the popular cause. It is mentioned as remarkable, that an offer of 900,000*l.* per annum was made to farm the excise, and was not accepted. The expenditure of the country was much larger than it had ever been, but its resources were equal to its necessities.

The national industry.

Nor was the intellectual state of the country, embracing literature, science, and art, so unsatisfactory as the action of civil war, and the continuance of so much political restlessness, might lead us to suppose. The age in which Cromwell and Blake made history, and in which Milton and Lucy Hutchinson committed it to writing, could not have been an age of low mental cul-

Intellectual life.

BOOK I.

ture. Nor could the times which produced Savile's edition of 'Chrysostom,' 'Walton's Polyglot,' and the writings of Howe, and Baxter, and Owen, have been times without learning. Nothing could be worse than the condition of Oxford when the fallen fortunes of the king obliged him to fly from it. It may then be said to have passed into the hands of the Independents, and the change for the better which immediately followed is confessed by men little disposed to make such admissions. Colleges which had been converted into barracks, were now filled with students. Cromwell became chancellor, and promised all suitable encouragement to the studies of the place. The enemies of himself and of his followers might represent him as unfriendly to learning, but he would show such representations to be unjust.* Concerning Oxford under Cromwell, even Clarendon thus writes: 'It yielded a harvest of extraordinary good and sound knowledge in all parts of learning: and many who were wickedly introduced, applied themselves to the study of learning, and the practice of virtue. So that when it pleased God to bring king Charles II. back to his throne, he found that university abounding in excellent learning, and

* Within a year after becoming Protector, Cromwell made a present of twenty-five volumes of MSS. to the University of Oxford, all in Greek, except two or three. *Mercurius Politicus*, No. 223, p. 3773. He also settled 100*l.* a year on a divinity reader; and interposed to prevent the valuable library of Archbishop Usher from going by sale into a foreign country. This library included many valuable MSS., and the whole were presented to Trinity College, Dublin. In 1657, he founded a college at Durham, and made liberal provision for the support of fourteen fellows. Peck's *Memoirs of Oliver Cromwell*, 60. We have elsewhere mentioned the encouragement given by him to Walton in the publication of his Polyglot, and the grateful acknowledgment in the preface to that great work.

‘ little inferior to what it was before its desolation.’* CHAP. IV.

Much praise on this account was due to its vice-chancellor, Dr. Owen. The Royal Society owes its origin to the scientific men then found there.

But what of the arts? In 1645, some Vandal resolutions were passed in parliament concerning the pictures at Whitehall, by men who had their own notions about superstition in such matters. But there were men in that assembly who execrated the proceeding, and were powerful enough to neutralize it. Colonel Lambert was himself an artist. Cromwell purchased the cartoons, and when he came into power gave them back to the nation. He also compelled some other men to relinquish the purchases of that kind which they had made. The taste of the king had disposed the wealthy to become patrons of art, and their culture in this respect was so far appreciated through the years of the Commonwealth, that at the Restoration their homes were found to be singularly rich in works by the best masters, and in all kinds of *virtu*.† That the sway of a republic which

The Arts
and Taste.

* *History of the Reb.* v. 483.

† Some men denounce in strong terms the Vandal devastation which is said to have been perpetrated by the parliamentary army. All such descriptions are to be received with caution. The officers in the army of the parliament were less likely, for the most part, to sanction any such proceedings, especially in the early stages of the war, than the same class of persons among the royalists. Only a few months after the commencement of hostilities, Prince Rupert, the nephew of the king, set an example in this respect, which was too readily followed by others. Fawley Court, in Oxfordshire, was the seat of Whitelocke, the eminent lawyer, and had been the residence of his father the judge. Rupert's men were quartered there, and added every sort of waste to every sort of insolence. They consumed one hundred loads of corn and hay, and littered their horses with sheaves of good wheat. They broke down the park paling, killed most of the deer, and let loose the remainder. The prince gave away the pack of hounds he found there,

BOOK I. commended itself to the many-sided intelligence of Cromwell, and to the high classical culture of Milton, was really unfavourable to art, may be the notion of shallow people, but well-informed and impartial men will have other thoughts concerning it. The frown cast by the religious men of that age on much which passed under the name of art and poetry, was to their honour, as the heads of families, and as persons of a manly culture. And it has been very justly said, that in the riper forms of public taste among ourselves, the æsthetic standard of those Puritan times is everywhere receiving an unconscious homage from our own. ‘After all, the great fact stands, that the only lasting poet of that generation was a Puritan; and one who, if he did not write dramas in sport, at least acted dramas in earnest. For drama means, etymologically, action and doing; and of the drama there are, and always will be, two kinds: one the representative, the other the actual; and for a world in which there is no superabundance of good

which were said to have been the pride of the county. In the library were many books and writings of great value. It was in fact one of the first libraries in England. Some of the manuscripts were torn up, and used by the destroyers to light their pipes. Others were taken away, including the title deeds of the estate, and some learned papers from Whitelocke’s own pen, and from the pen of his father. After eating and drinking whatever they could find, the soldiers began to break open the chests and coffers. The linens and household stuff they took, and even the ticks of the beds, after having given the feathers to the winds. They seized four carriages, and all the saddle-horses. Into the coaches they stowed articles of antiquity, ancient plate and gems, collected through many years by Whitelocke and his father. All these things were lost for ever to the owner, and so greatly was the house injured, that it could never be used as a comfortable residence again. When these things were done, nothing of the kind, so far as we know, had disgraced the conduct of the parliamentarians. *Memoir of Bulstrode Whitelocke, 170, 171.*

‘deeds, the latter will be always the better kind. It is
‘good to represent historical actions in verse, and on the
‘stage: it is good to “purify,” as old Aristotle has
‘it, “the affections by pity and terror.” There is an
‘ideal tragedy and an ideal comedy also, which one can
‘imagine as an integral part of the highest Christian
‘civilization. But when Christian tragedy sinks below
‘the standard of heathen Greek tragedy; when instead
‘of setting forth heroical deeds, it teaches the audience
‘new possibilities of crime, and new excuses for those
‘crimes; when instead of purifying the affections by
‘pity and terror, it confounds the moral sense by exciting
‘pity and terror merely for the sake of excitement, care-
‘less whether they be well or ill directed, then it is of
‘the devil, and the sooner it returns to its father the
‘better for mankind. When, again, comedy, instead of
‘stirring a divine scorn of baseness, or even a kindly
‘and indulgent smile at the weakness and oddities of
‘humanity, learns to make a mock at sin—to find ex-
‘cuses for the popular frailties it pretends to expose—
‘then it also is of the devil, and to the devil let it go;
‘while honest and earnest men, who have no such
‘exceeding love of “art” that they must needs have
‘bad art rather than none at all, do the duty which lies
‘nearest them amidst clean whitewash and honest prose.’
The representative art of those times was nearly all of
the devil-bred description here supposed. ‘God grant
‘that our race,’ says the same writer, ‘ever remembering
‘that the golden age of the English drama was one of
‘private immorality, public hypocrisy, ecclesiastical pe-
‘dantry, and regal tyranny, and ended in the temporary
‘downfall of church and crown, may be more ready to
‘do fine things than to write fine books; and act in their

BOOK I. 'lives, as those old Puritans did, a drama which their 'descendants may be glad to put on paper for them, 'long after they are dead.' Most true also is it, that Puritanism in the past has given law in matters of taste, to a large extent, in the present. We are all roundheads now, leaving lovelocks to the women, where they are always graceful. We are all simple and Puritan-like in our tailoring now, leaving the millinery of the old cavalier school where it ought to be left. Play-going, and play-writing too, may not be extinct, but how have they fallen? Not that all the world has become Puritan, but that the sound sense and sound feeling of Puritanism have sufficed to bring the world to its side without the world's knowing it.

So England need not be ashamed of her Commonwealth. Certainly, the religious party whose principles and energy contributed so largely to create it, and to make it what it was, are not likely so to feel. True, the concern of Cromwell was not for a republic, but for freedom. Whatever form or combination in civil polity might best secure that end was best in his estimation. But in this respect the Protector simply embodied the feeling which has been hereditary with the English Independents. It was only as the hope of finding liberty under a monarchy waned, that the hope of finding it under a republic prevailed. The good was sought in that quarter, not from choice, but from necessity. How the action of religious parties tended to bring affairs to this issue has been shown—and shown, it is hoped, so as to correct some common misconceptions in relation to this portion of English history.



BOOK II.

The Confessors of 1662.



CHAPTER I.

Causes of the Restoration.



ROMWELL left no successor. The nation had drifted into parties which no policy could reconcile, and which his genius only could so balance against each other as to control those reactionary tendencies which were to end in the Restoration. No man saw more clearly than the Protector the probable course of events when the helm should pass from his hands. Richard Cromwell was not a man to have won his way to power anywhere, and by no means the man to retain possession of the supreme power of the state in such circumstances. Had sovereignty come to him as it came to Charles I., he might have reigned long and happily, and England might have realized her progress without a civil war, and without passing through the years of disorganization which were to follow. Such consequences from the accidents of personal character in the sovereign, are incidents from which nations governed

CHAP. I.

Causes of
the Resto-
ration—
Death of
Cromwell.

BOOK II. by kings can never be secure, except as the national character shall become such as to ensure that even the king shall be a subject in the presence of the law. It was not to the credit of England that the death of a single man should have made the approaching revolution inevitable.

Conduct of the army. The conduct of the army in resisting the intolerance of the Presbyterian faction in the Long Parliament, and in resisting its supporters elsewhere, was conduct which became men holding such a relation to their country. They had suffered much, and hazarded more, to put down priestly arrogance and arbitrary rule, and what they had aimed to do they had done. That they should refuse to cede a power to the presbyter which they had denied to the priest was only natural; and it was no less natural that they should regard the men as not likely to prove wise guardians of civil liberty, who so little understood the nature of religious liberty.

But, unhappily, faction in the army was to become as mischievous as faction in some other connexions. Feuds soon grew up, as we have seen, between the Independents and the Presbyterians—especially between the former and the Scots. Differences on theological and ecclesiastical grounds followed, sect rivalling sect. Next came a new freedom in political speculation, dividing officers from men, and then the men among themselves. It may be doubted if there was a single man among those who took up arms at the commencement of the war, who did so with the remotest thought of becoming a republican. But the war was protracted; the continuance of war was the continuance of privation, inquietude, and danger. Every new rising among the royalists added to the old exasperation. In the train of these events came the many procrastinations, and the many duplicities, on

the part of the king. So the talk in camp and guard-room came to be, that no terms with Charles Stuart would be safe; and that the bloodguiltiness resting on the land rested eminently on him. Cromwell was the last man to abandon the hope of saving the king. He prosecuted that policy until he dared not pursue it further. He knew that his efforts in that direction had impaired his influence and endangered his life. So deep and fixed did the democratic feeling in the army become, that the idea of kingship was not to be tolerated, even with Cromwell as king. It is probable that Colonel Lambert was more possessed with the notion of some day becoming protector, than with any real care about upholding republican institutions. But Harrison, Fleetwood, Desborough, Ludlow, and Hutchinson were all representative men, and sincere beyond doubt in their professed convictions. Nevertheless, they sealed the fate of themselves and of their followers when they succeeded in deterring their great leader from assuming the title of Oliver I. Cromwell saw what they had done, and conformed to their narrow and stubborn ways with a heavy heart. He knew England better than any other Englishman, and he knew the country would not long consent to be governed according to the fancies of those misguided men. Nine-tenths of the nation were in favour of a monarchy; and no small portion of the country would have given their allegiance to the hero of Naseby and Dunbar, if he had been allowed to take his place in history as the restorer of the ancient constitution. Clarendon saw clearly that the course taken by the army magnates had saved the nation for the king.*

* 'It was confidently believed, that upon some addresses he had formerly made to some principal noblemen of the kingdom, and

BOOK II.

Long dis-
settlement
of the
country.

On the death of Cromwell, nearly twenty years had passed since the peaceful avocations of England had been disturbed by the first rumours of civil war. Since that time the land had not known rest. In that interval the first great war had been followed by a second, and the country had never ceased to be a network of insurrection and conspiracy. As the nation had never sustained such armaments, it had never felt the need of so large an expenditure, and had never been subject to such heavy taxation. There was rigid economy, but there was of necessity a vast outlay. The exactions which fell specially upon the royalists strengthened the exchequer of the government, but tended to perpetuate and deepen inquietude among its opponents. Even the adherents to the popular cause often began to cool in their ardour, as the costs of their policy were found to be so serious, and as the prospect of realizing its object seemed to be constantly receding from them. Many thousand families seemed to have worn their mourning in vain. The industrious over all England had taxed their industry as their fathers had not, and the promise of a sufficient return was still only a promise, and a promise in which it became only more difficult than ever to confide. With the few, at such times, personal considerations may be a

‘ some friendly expostulation he had by himself, or through some
‘ friends with them, why they would have no acquaintance with him,
‘ the answer from them severally was, that if he would make himself
‘ king, they should easily know what they had to do, but they knew
‘ nothing of the obedience they were to pay to a protector, and that
‘ these returns first disposed him to that ambition. They who at that
‘ time exercised their thoughts with most sagacity, looked upon that
‘ refusal of his as an immediate act of Almighty God towards the king’s
‘ restoration, and many of the soberest men in the nation confessed,
‘ after the king’s return, that their dejected spirits were wonderfully
‘ raised by that infatuation of his.’ Clarendon, *Hist.* vii. 201-204.

small matter compared with a great public interest ; but with the many, constancy under privation, and patience under delay, must not be expected to be so elastic. It was hardly surprising that a people, after so many years of unrest, should give signs of desiring rest. As the new powers had not given them quiet, many began to doubt whether that boon was not destined to come after all from the old.

We have seen something of the schism which had grown up between the Presbyterians and Independents. It is clear from the writings of many of the Presbyterians, that the capacity, energy, and successes of the Independents had filled the minds of many in that party with a degree of awe and apprehension amounting to a superstition. The skill with which these new religionists, not long since so feeble and despised, had marred the ecclesiastical policy of the Presbyterians from the beginning of these changes ; the daring with which they had swept one impediment after another from their path in the field ; the success with which they had counteracted the most subtle forms of conspiracy ; the splendour they had thrown about the English name by sea and land ; and the boldness with which they avowed their innovating speculations concerning church matters, all combined to present to the sight of ordinary and timid men a spectacle so amazing as to seem to be supernatural. So great was the dread of this new power ; so annoying and irritating was the arrogance which some of its adherents assumed—soldiers becoming dogmatists in theology, and sectaries forming their ‘gathered churches’ in parishes where the law had instituted a regular ministry—that the prospect of almost any change became welcome compared with subjection to such a state of things. The

CHAP. I.

Alarm and hostile policy of the Presbyterians.

BOOK II. existing rule was often described as ‘atheistical,’—the measure in which the action of the state in regard to religion was allowed being so limited as to threaten to exempt the civil powers from all interference on that subject, which, in their estimation, would be to make the state atheistical.

Henry Newcome, of Manchester, may be taken as a sample of this class of men. In 1651, he thus writes in his autobiography: ‘In the beginning of this month of May there were some soldiers quartered about us, some of them very zealous, good men. Captain Merriman lay at Sutton, and several of the soldiers being at the church on the Lord’s-day, the captain on the Monday came to see me, and after I went to see him. The truth is, they were so spiritual and inward, and were such taking company to me, that it is a mercy I was not ensnared by them, for they were high Independents, and were, I remember, talking of embodying the saints, &c. I have thought of the merciful providence of God, that the Thursday after Mr. Hollinworth and Mr. Meek preached the exercise at Macclesfield, and Mr. Hollinworth did notably balance my conceit of the army, speaking freely of their desperate designs, and how such devices could not be carried on but by such pretences, and he instanced in the rebellion of Corah, &c. This was exceeding seasonable, and stopped me betimes, that I never came nearer to them. But by their zeal I might easily have been drawn aside. And another mercy I have often thought about and acknowledged. Major-general Harrison was once on his way from Newcastle, on purpose to have seen me. This might have puffed me up, he being then in his greatness, and he was a most insinuating man, and a furious

‘Separatist. But the Lord would not suffer me to be tempted, for he was some way hindered, and I never was acquainted with him.’*

Had this good man known the army of the Commonwealth he would have known that ‘very zealous, good men,’ and men possessing a ‘spiritual and inward’ religion, were not difficult to find there. His gratitude in reviewing the danger he had escaped is very characteristic: and not less so was brother Hollinworth’s discoursing about the Independents as men whose religion was a pretence, and who, after the manner of Corah and his company, were opposers of the true ministry, and must share the doom of such offenders!

This feeling among the Presbyterians, which had done so much to weaken the Commonwealth, was to be a leading cause of the Restoration. Amidst the confusions which ensued on the death of Cromwell, the old royalists spared no pains to make this disaffection tributary to their policy. The communication on this topic, between Sir Ralph Clare, of Kidderminster, and Richard Baxter, was the communication in substance which was taking place everywhere between the two parties. How Baxter felt in relation to the Independents, and those adhering to them, may be known from the fact, that Sir Ralph had deemed it safe to make him acquainted with the intended rising of the royalists in Salisbury, and under Sir George Booth, in Cheshire. Speaking of the Presbyterians as a body, Baxter says, ‘Our resolution was—we are bound by the Covenant to the king that last was, and by the oath of allegiance to his heirs. All the changes since have been made unlawfully by rebellious sectaries. Therefore, we ought, as loyal

Royalism
of the
Presby-
terians.

* Published by the Cheetham Society, 26, 27.

BOOK II. 'subjects, to restore the king, and for the issue, let God
 'do what he will.'* We may admire the conscientiousness of this decision, we need not say anything concerning the narrowness of the political thinking which it betrays. But such language, addressed to General Monk from different parts, and especially from the capital, emboldened that dark-minded man in his ultimate purpose. He abandoned his Republicanism, and declared for the king. In this manner the Independents were left to the experience awaiting them at the Restoration. It must be confessed, however, that the party which surrendered the interests of the Independents, after this manner, were not very careful of their own. If the intolerance of the Presbyterians could only have been converted into so much political sagacity, the nation might still have been safe.

Strength of
 the Royal-
 ists.

But the great cause of the Restoration must be traced to the number and influence of the royalist party, and to the largeness of the royalist promises. Before the war, that party had included the majority in the upper and in the lower ranks. It retained that majority to the end; and there had been much in the last twenty years that could not fail to swell its number, and to add greatly to its antagonist feeling. To abolish the house of lords, was not to abolish lordship, but to wound the sensibility of a powerful order of men, and to ensure their hostility. Many a noble clung only the more tenaciously to his rank when thus denied to him; and in the eyes of dependents, such men became the object of a deeper reverence and attachment, as thus shorn of their hereditary splendour. The pride of the gentry, also, was not a little irritated, as they found themselves

* *Life*, Part ii. 216.

thrust aside, and treated as a vanquished class, by a comparatively rude military aristocracy.

The civil changes which took place carried these consequences along with them, and the ecclesiastical changes were in some respects even more obnoxious. It would be a mistake to suppose that the authorities who admitted men to the pulpits of the established church under the Long Parliament and the Commonwealth, were content with a low grade of mental culture in the persons who came before them. It may be safely affirmed that the average intelligence of the men so admitted, was higher than in the case of the men who had been generally approved under the administration of the bishops. But their theology was, for the most part, of a fixed type; their political bias was often strongly marked; and there was a portion of them, no doubt, who gave more offence by some faults in manner, than some of their predecessors had given by faults of a much graver kind. It is a fact, that the men constituting the two houses on the meeting of the Long Parliament were, with scarcely an exception, moderate churchmen. It is also a fact, that from 1660, far on towards 1688, the same men, or the descendants of the same, are found to be very zealous, and most of them very high churchmen. This marked change of feeling through the whole of the upper stratum of society is a material fact, and one which modern Nonconformists would do well to look at in relation to its cause. Something there must have been grievously wrong in the temper and tendencies of ecclesiastical affairs before 1660 to have produced such a result. The strong democratic element which was then thrown to the surface in the church, as well as in the state, was, no doubt, the main cause.

BOOK II. What the men were, who were the subjects of this change, their influence would be. It was easy to foresee that if a time should come for a reconstruction of the English church, the new machinery would be carefully adjusted to curb and extrude evils of this nature. Under Laud, the church was too much the church of the court. Under the Long Parliament and the Commonwealth, it was too much the church of the Westminster Assembly and of the army. In neither case had it the breadth necessary to be in harmony with the nation, and in both cases its narrowness brought its penalty. It would have been well if the party which came into power in 1660 had remembered this fact. But they did not. The church was then to become the church of the bishops and of the squirearchy. The same sin was committed, and the same penalty has followed. The church would not be national, and half the nation has left it.

So the hold of Puritanism on the nobility and gentry which in past times had been so considerable, came almost to an end. Even in the middle class, where it had always been strong, it became, from the causes mentioned, much less potent than formerly. Among the lowest class it had little to lose. Nothing religious in our history had ever reached that level more than very partially. Under the surface covered by Puritanism, there ran an old stream of feculence, which had flowed on almost unchecked, from the time of Henry VIII. to the time of Cromwell. The comparative freedom of the press under the Commonwealth allowed much of this low, sensuous depravity to find expression in that form. The Puritan clergy always mourned over it: and the later Presbyterians would have subjected it to a rigorous restraint. But it had perpetuated itself from

times long past, and with the Restoration it was to burst forth as through a loosened embankment. To that class, the return of the king was indeed the return of liberty. CHAP. I.

But the royalists did not trust to their numbers and influence. Their promises were such that their very largeness might have justified suspicion. When the risings in the west and in Cheshire had failed, Baxter said to Sir Ralph Clare,—the cause of so much disaster is to be found in the high hand with which your party are disposed to carry everything. The Episcopalians, if Dr. Hammond and other divines may be taken as expressing their feeling, in place of becoming more moderate in adversity, have become only more extravagant than ever in their pretensions. They have learnt to speak of our reformed churches as no churches, and of our ministry as no ministry. Their only terms of concord are such as Protestants might expect from Papists—absolute submission. The Presbyterians care for little more than that the ministry of the church shall consist of religious and competent men; not, as too often heretofore, of the scandalous and incompetent; and that a reasonable liberty of preaching, and of a voluntary gathering together of Christian people for Christian exercises, should be conceded. Had anything been done to secure these objects, Presbyterians and Episcopalians might have been one, and together would have been strong enough to have placed the needed restraint on ‘the turbulent sectaries and soldiers.’ But as matters stand, persecution, and the ruin of the ministry and churches, are expected by most, if prelacy should become ascendant again. Royalist promises.

BOOK II.

In reply, Sir Ralph ‘confidently affirmed that he, ‘being most thoroughly acquainted with Dr. Hammond, ‘who received letters from Dr. Morley, then with the ‘king, could assure me, that all moderation was ‘intended, and that any episcopacy, how low soever, ‘would be accepted. A bare presidency in synods, such ‘as Bishop Usher in his “Reduction” did require, was ‘all that was intended. Yea, Bishop Hall’s way of ‘moderation would suffice. There should be no lord ‘bishops, nor large dioceses, or great revenues, much less ‘any persecuting power. The essentials of episcopacy ‘were all that was expected. No godly minister should ‘be displaced, much less silenced, nor unworthy ones ‘any more set up. There should be no thought of ‘revenge for anything past. All should be equal.’* Such were the kindly assurances of Sir Ralph, and such were the assurances of men of his class on all hands. ‘All the noblemen and gentlemen that had been seques- ‘tered for the king’s cause against the old parliament, ‘did in several counties publish invitations to all men ‘to promote the king’s return, protesting against ‘thoughts of revenge or uncharitableness, and professing ‘their resolution to put up all injuries, and to live in ‘peace.’† So common, so reiterated, and so compre- hensive were these promises, that not only the Presby-

* *Life.* Part ii. 207, 208.

† *Ibid.* 217. ‘Dr. Morley, and other of the divines of that side, did ‘privately meet with several persons of honour, and some ministers, ‘and professed resolutions for great moderation and lenity.’ *Ibid.* Hyde, writing to Dr. Barwick, says, in April: ‘The king very well ‘approves and desires that he (Dr. Morley) and you, and other discreet ‘men of the clergy, should enter into conversation with those of the ‘Presbyterian party, that if it be possible you may reduce them to ‘such a temper,’ &c. Kennet, *Reg.* 116.

terians, but the Independents, and even the army, were warranted in supposing themselves included in them. With the restoration of the king, there was to be social order, a liberal church, and the general freedom which had been sought by the sword, but not obtained.

In the wake of all these events, came his majesty's memorable Declaration from Breda. 'And because 'the passion and uncharitableness of the times,' said the king, 'have produced several opinions in religion, by 'which men are engaged in parties and animosities 'against each other, which, when they shall hereafter 'unite in a freedom of conversation, will be compared, 'or better understood, we do declare *a liberty to tender 'consciences; and that no man shall be disquieted, or 'called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of 'religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom; 'and that we shall be ready to consent to such an act 'of parliament as, upon mature deliberation, shall be 'offered to us, for the full granting that indulgence.'**

Declaration
from Breda,
April 4.

With this important document came a letter from his majesty to the general, the council of state, and the army, and separate letters to the two houses of parliament, to the commanders of the fleet, and to the citizens of London, all full of promises adapted to quiet apprehension, and to awaken the brightest hopes.†

In his conferences with the Presbyterian divines, before embarking for England, his majesty spoke still more

* Kenner's Register, 109, 110.

† Ibid. 105-110. It was contrived that many letters should come from persons of reputation abroad to influential parties in this country, in which the strongest assurances were given as to the sound protestations, sincere piety, and great personal worth of the king. Some continued distrustful, but more were willing to suppose themselves mistaken and uncharitable in doubting on that subject.

BOOK II. definitely concerning ecclesiastical affairs. Clarendon, indeed, knowing, when he wrote his history, how all those promises had been falsified, and mainly through his influence, has not given a faithful account of what passed in those interviews. But even from him we learn, that when the king claimed the liberty to use the Book of Common Prayer, he reminded the ministers that he had ceded to them the liberty of dispensing with the use of it. So also in regard to the use of the surplice, and such things generally.*

Such, in brief, were the causes of the Restoration. The divisions in the army may be said to have left the country without a government. Monk, aided by the weakness of Fleetwood, and by the mistakes of Lambert, had contrived to place his division of the army largely under the command of concealed royalists. The way was thus prepared for the combination of parties which was to issue in the success of his policy. Many, even among the Presbyterians, looked towards the coming change with misgiving; some to so great an extent, that they would not be parties to the proceedings of their more credulous brethren at this juncture. The Independents might well be even less hopeful. But such was the confluence of tendencies in this direction, that even the most distrustful were obliged to be passive, and were constrained to hope the best, though with little apparent reason.

* *Hist.* vi. 501-503.



CHAPTER II.

The Concessions of the Nonconformists in 1660.

THE day came on which Charles was to land at Dover. The three or four preceding months had been months of strange and ceaseless agitation. To-day, the king and his friends had looked across the sea towards England in most jubilant expectation. To-morrow, clouds had come over the prospect, and hope was followed by despair. So the scene changed once and again. Parties and interests among us rose and fell in their rivalries like waves in the world of waters by which our island is encircled. Large space might be occupied in relating how the men—given to all varieties of speculation—talked, and wrote, and acted. Both the press and the pulpit gave forth sounds widely dissonant. But the cry which rose above the rest was that which proclaimed the wonderful change for the better which was to come with the return of the king. His majesty was to be so good a king. The old royalists were to show themselves so magnanimous. Even the bishops were to be so lenient and liberal; and the whole country was to become so united, so pros-

CHAP. II.

Agitation
preceding
the return
of the King.

BOOK II.

perous, and so great. Men who could not be pleased with such an advent, were men to be pleased with nothing.* So the stream flowed on, and many thoughtful minds—the Marvels and Miltons of that day—looked on it as a destiny to which, for a while, it became them to submit.

Policy of
Clarendon.

Some of the early proceedings of the king and his friends, seemed to promise that their pledges to pursue a liberal policy would not be wholly forgotten. Hyde, Ormond, Culpepper, and Nicholas, had been exiles with their sovereign. The first became chancellor, the second lord steward, the third master of the rolls, and the last secretary of state. But with these confidential ministers, others were united who had been more or less opposed to the late monarch; some, indeed, as in the case of the earl of Manchester, having been in arms against him. It was contrived, however, by Clarendon, that the real power of the government should be in a junta of his own choosing, formed ostensibly to take the oversight of foreign affairs. The king was a party to this underplay, and his majesty and the junta managed everything pretty much at their pleasure.†

Promise of
favour to
the Presby-
terians.

So, in ecclesiastical affairs, there were appearances which seemed to reassure the anxious Presbyterians, and to throw some light on the future in the estimation of men who were less hopeful. The earl of Manchester had become lord chamberlain, and was authorized to raise some ten or twelve of the leading Presbyterian divines to the rank of chaplains in ordinary to the king.

* The reader who will turn to the pages of Kennet's *Register*, the *Diary of Pepys*, and similar works, will find abundant illustrations of what is above stated.

† Clarendon's *Life*, by himself, 2-27. Burnet's *Own Times*, i. 270.

Calamy, Baxter, Dr. Reynolds, and Dr. Spurstowe, were of the number so distinguished, and were further honoured in being chosen to preach before the king. Baxter, in conversation with the earl of Manchester, and with lord Broghill, afterwards earl of Orrery, apprized those noblemen of conferences between himself and many Episcopalians, concerning the possible terms of a settlement,—mentioning, especially, the unity of judgment on that point which had subsisted between himself and the late archbishop Usher. Lord Broghill communicated the substance of these statements to the king, and the result was an interview between his majesty and certain of the Presbyterian ministers, with a view to some adjustment in relation to the proposed conference between the two parties. The place of meeting was the residence of the lord chamberlain. The king was attended by lord Clarendon and the earl of St. Alban's. The chief speaker among the ministers was Baxter.*

CHAP. II.
June.

After some general remarks on the advantages of union, Baxter assured his majesty, that though there were fanatical and turbulent people in England, those for whom the ministers present were concerned to plead were not such, but were truly loyal in their feeling, simply desirous to live a godly life, and to be at peace with all good men. Some differences there were about ceremonies and discipline, but the great solicitude of their congregations was, that they might not be deprived of their faithful pastors, nor be obliged to accept the ignorant, the scandalous, or the unworthy, in their place. To them, such a change would be a deeper affliction than any earthly calamity that could befall

Meeting
between the
King and
the Presby-
terians.

* Baxter's *Life*, 229-232.

BOOK II.

them, and it must be the wish of his majesty to reign over a contented and grateful, and not over a dissatisfied and unhappy people. ‘And I presumed to tell him,’ says Baxter, ‘that the late usurpers that were over us, so well understood their own interest, that to promote it they had found the way of doing good to be the most effectual means, and had placed and encouraged many thousand faithful ministers in the church, even such as detested their usurpation; and so far had they attained their ends thereby, that it was the principal means of their interest in the people, and of the good opinion that had been conceived of them.’ Hence, it was confidently hoped, that his majesty’s administration would not be such as to make a less favourable impression on his subjects than had been thus made upon them. And this object, it was submitted, might be secured by a careful observance of three rules,—not to make any unnecessary thing a term of communion; not to allow the discipline of the church to become so lax as to connive at sin; and not to suffer the faithful pastors who must exercise such discipline, if it be exercised, to be removed, and unworthy men to be obtruded in their place.*

What the King will do.

The king listened patiently, expressed himself much pleased with what had been said, and was not only favourable to an amicable settlement on the basis of mutual concession, but was ‘resolved to see it brought to pass.’ So much to that effect was said, that ‘old Mr. Ash burst out into tears with joy, and could not forbear expressing what gladness this promise of his majesty had put into his heart.’ The king observed, that the great difficulty would be about church govern-

* Baxter’s *Life*, 230, 231.

ment. If that could be agreed upon, the rest would be easy.*

The ministers were required to state in writing the most they could assent to on that point. It was said, in reply, that the persons present had no authority to determine such matters for their brethren. But his majesty rejoined, that any attempt to consult their friends through the kingdom would consume much time, and cause great noise; they might confer with ministers near them in London; and, let it be understood, that what was done should bind no one except those who were parties to it. The king, in the meanwhile, would take a similar course with persons on the other side. The ministers now had only to request, that if they brought in a statement, showing how much they were prepared to concede, their brethren who differed from them should be required to bring in at the same time a similar document, showing how much they were inclined to relinquish, for the sake of concord,—‘and the king said it should be so.’†

Proposal of
a Confer-
ence.

The ministers now assembled from day to day in Sion College, to deliberate on the terms of union that should be proposed. Their brethren in the metropolis were invited, and ‘divers from the country’ who happened to be in town, were from time to time present. But some of the London ministers who were expected to attend did not make their appearance.

The paper prepared was the work, mainly, of Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds. The section relating to ceremonies was drawn up by Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Worth, both of whom became conformists and bishops.‡

Proposals of
ministers in
1660.

* Baxter's *Life*, 231.

† *Ibid.* 231, 232.

‡ *Ibid.* 232-237. Cardwell's *History of Conferences connected*

BOOK II. The points in common between the two parties were material. Concerning the lawfulness and expediency of a state church—concerning the duty, in fact, of the state to sustain such an institution, the ministers were as well persuaded as the government. They ceded to the full the ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown as settled by law. They were satisfied, too, in common with the reformed churches, as to the lawfulness and expediency of a liturgy; and they stated, moreover, that they were not opposed to episcopacy, that they never had been opposed to it; that, on the contrary, they had always regarded the principle of that form of polity as primitive and scriptural. But the differences between the Sion College divines and the old church of England clergy were, nevertheless, considerable. These differences had respect to government, discipline, and worship.

The Non-conformists and Episcopacy.

The episcopacy which the ministers were concerned to uphold was that 'true, ancient, primitive episcopacy, or presidency, as it was balanced and managed by a due commixture of presbyters therewith, as a fit means to avoid corruptions, partiality, tyranny, and other evils, which may be incident to the administration of one single person.' To such an episcopate they could give a cordial adhesion. But the English hierarchy, as it existed before 1640, was deemed exceptionable on many grounds. The diocese of the bishop was too large, so that the spiritual oversight belonging to the primitive bishop could not possibly be exercised. The consequence was, that the bishop delegated his duties to a number of subordinates, some of whom were not

with the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer, 277-285. Documents relating to the Settlement of the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity, 12-21.

even ministers. Having learnt, moreover, to claim a distinction from presbyters by divine right, the prelates were wont to assume 'the sole power of ordination and jurisdiction;' and often subjected ministers and people to inquisitions, innovations, and ceremonies, without sanction of law, and deprived ministers of their cures according to their pleasure.

The remedy of such evils, it was said, would be found in taking archbishop Usher's 'Reduction of Episcopacy to the form of synodical government received in the ancient church,' as a groundwork towards 'an accommodation.'* The great change proposed in this 'Reduction' was, that the government of the church should not be in any case by the bishop alone, but by the bishop conjoined with his presbytery. This is the form of government said to be indicated in the scriptural account of proceedings in the church at Ephesus. It is supposed to be clear from the Acts that there was in that church a ruling presbytery; and clear from the epistle in the Revelations, that there was also an 'angel,' or chief presbyter, who had presidency over the rest. And according to Ignatius, Tertullian, and Cyprian, this was the form of government common to the early church. The concurrence of the presbytery was thought to be so requisite to the acts of the bishop, 'that in the fourth council of Carthage, it was concluded that the bishop might hear no man's cause without the presence of the clergy, which we find also inserted in the canons of Egbert, who was archbishop of York in the Saxon times, and afterwards into the body of the canon law itself. True it is, that in our church this kind of Presbyterian government hath been long disused, yet,

Usher's Reduction of Episcopacy.

* Baxter's *Life*, 238-241.

BOOK II. ' seeing it still professes that every pastor has a right to
 ' rule the church (from whence the name of rector was
 ' at first given to him), and to administer the discipline
 ' of Christ, as well as to dispense the doctrine and sacra-
 ' ments, and the restraint of the exercise of that right
 ' proceeds only from the custom now received in this
 ' realm, no man can doubt but that by another law of
 ' the land this hindrance may well be removed.'

Then follows a series of statements intended to show how easily this much-needed restoration of the ancient custom of the church might be accomplished. Let the incumbents and churchwardens in each parish, it is said, have the charge of discipline in the several parishes assigned to them; let there be a monthly synod of incumbents within a given district, to which all cases not settled by the parish authorities may be submitted, every such synod possessing the power of ordination as well as of jurisdiction under a suffragan bishop or president, who might take the place of the rural dean; let there also be a diocesan synod meeting once or twice a year, where the pastors of the diocese, or deputations from the monthly synods, may join with the bishop in some of the higher acts of discipline, and in revising the lower; and let there be provincial synods separately for the provinces of Canterbury and York, consisting of all the bishops of those provinces respectively, and of clergy chosen to represent each diocese, the primate in either case being moderator, or some one of the bishops by his appointment, these provincial assemblies being convened triennially, and being the final ecclesiastical authority on all church questions.*

* *Documents relating to the Settlement of the Church of England*, 22-26. *Baxter's Life and Times*, 238-242.

In regard to a liturgy, it was urged that it should not be so enjoined as to exclude free prayer; that it should not be too long, not include needless repetitions, and should be in its language and substance as scriptural and unexceptionable as possible. The Book of Common Prayer contained much that had raised conscientious difficulty in many pious and well-disposed minds. It had been long out of use; and if imposed as it stood would tend to create new discontents in place of healing old differences. 'Some learned, godly, and moderate divines of both persuasions, indifferently chosen,' might be wisely employed, either in preparing a new volume, or in revising the old.

CHAP. II.
Concerning
the Liturgy.

Concerning ceremonies, it was observed, that the teaching of Scripture on that subject, consisting mainly as it does in general rules, had no doubt left much to be determined by the light of nature and Christian prudence. But it was argued, that all matters supposed to have been so left should be of a description to accord with such rules; and that all observances of a purely human origin, in place of being made to partake, as almost seems to be the case, of the significancy and moral efficacy of sacraments, should be wholly dispensed with, or left indifferent. The church of England having retained so many forms from the times of popery, the Romanists had never ceased to cherish the hope of seeing her return to that communion; and the consciences of many good men had, from the beginning of the Reformation, been greatly distressed from this cause, not a few becoming Separatists from her fellowship. That the ceremonies taking these grave consequences along with them are not in the Scripture is clear; and it may be assumed, that had they been necessary to the

On cere-
monies.

BOOK II. orderly and acceptable worship of God, they would certainly have been there. The divines then become somewhat more specific in their allusions, and say, ‘ May ‘ it therefore please your majesty, out of your princely ‘ care of healing our sad breaches, graciously to grant, ‘ that kneeling at the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, ‘ and such holy days as are but of human institution, ‘ may not be imposed on such as conscientiously scruple ‘ to observe them ; and that the use of the surplice, and ‘ the cross in baptism, and bowing at the name of Jesus ‘ rather than at the name of Christ or Emmanuel, or ‘ other names whereby that divine person, or either of the ‘ other persons so nominated, may be abolished ; these ‘ things being in the judgment of the imposers themselves ‘ but indifferent and mutable ; in the judgment of others ‘ a rock of offence ; and in the judgment of all not to ‘ be valued with the peace of the church. We likewise ‘ humbly present unto your most excellent majesty, that ‘ divers ceremonies which we conceive have no foundation in the law of the land, as erecting altars, bowing ‘ towards them, and such like, have been not only ‘ introduced, but in some places imposed ; whereby an ‘ arbitrary power has been usurped, divers ministers of ‘ the gospel, though conformable to the established ceremonies, troubled, some reverend and learned bishops ‘ offended, the Protestants grieved, and the Papists ‘ pleased, as hoping that those innovations might make ‘ way for greater changes.’ So did the Presbyterian divines state their case in the summer of 1660.

Presbyterian concession—its extent.

It will be seen, that in respect to church government nothing was required by the authors of these ‘ proposals ’ for which the name of archbishop Usher could not be adduced—the name which had stood higher than any

other in that age as an authority on all such questions. The Presbyterian polity embraced a lay eldership. But the petitioners, though zealous Presbyterians, do not venture a word in favour of that class of office-bearers. They did not believe in diocesan bishops, still less in archbishops; but, for the sake of peace, they consented to recognize both, and along with them the deans, the archdeacons, the prebends, the canons, and all the rest pertaining to the old hierarchy. Their only suit was, that the arbitrariness of the prelates might be somewhat moderated by their being obliged to rule conjointly with a clerical presbytery. This scheme might have been adopted to the letter, with immense advantage to the English church, and to the episcopacy of which that church has been so desirous of showing herself the conservator among Protestants. In this statement, moreover, nothing more was intended than to present what might prove 'a ground-work towards an accommodation.' In regard to the liturgy and ceremonies, no man could expect that less would be proposed. So that, bearing in mind the flood of evils which the old order of things had so recently brought upon the country, these suggestions, as precautions for the future, might well be viewed as evincing much considerateness and moderation.*

* Baxter's *Life and Times*, 233-237. *Documents*, 71-74.



CHAPTER III.

Ground taken by the Bishops in 1660.

BOOK II.

Unfair and
discourteous
proceeding
of the
Bishops,
July 8.



THE conference in the summer of 1660 was decisive. When the ministers sought an audience from the king, that they might submit their proposals to him, the prelates did not make their appearance, nor was the slightest communication received from them. The discourtesy and unfairness of this proceeding were significant of what was to follow. The king still spoke graciously and hopefully. But the prelates, becoming possessed of the address which the divines had presented, drew up an elaborate reply to it, the spirit and substance of which sufficed to show, that in place of being ready to cede much to ensure concord, they were resolved on finding excuses against ceding anything. By a most subtle piece of artifice, they had drawn the ministers into a statement of the terms on which they were willing to become conformists, and it became their policy to take care that no such terms should be granted. It was

deemed prudent to continue the semblance of negotiation. Time would bring its advantages. But there was to be no uncertainty as to the conclusion.* The memorable declaration by the king from Worcester House was still to come. The commission originating the Savoy conference between the bishops and the Presbyterian divines, was still to be issued. But from this time, Baxter and his friends saw what the end would be, and became simply concerned so to acquit themselves, in the evil times on which they were thrown, as to satisfy their brethren, and to satisfy posterity, that nothing had been left undone which could be accounted as likely to conduce to an amicable settlement.

As the answer from the prelates to these first proposals of the ministers was so marked in its influence on this discussion, it will be proper that the reader should be able to judge for himself concerning the drift and temper of that document.† It should also be stated, that on the appearance of this professed answer, Baxter was urged by his brethren to write a reply to it. When produced, though strictly truthful, this second paper evinced something of the wounded feeling natural to a man writing in such circumstances; and there was room to fear that the effect of such a document would be to provoke, rather than to conciliate, and to furnish an occasion for resentment to those who were seeking such occasion. Baxter accordingly had laboured to no purpose. This paper remained a private matter. But in this place, along with the account we give of the 'Answer' by the bishops, some reference will

CHAP. III.

The answer
of the
Bishops—
Baxter's
rejoinder.

* Baxter's *Life*, 241-247.

† *Documents*, 27-39. Baxter's *Life*, 242-247.

BOOK II. be made to what is said in the suppressed rejoinder to it.*

Schism
from imposi-
tion.

The ministers had remarked, in their address, that the bishops and themselves were happily agreed about 'the doctrinal truths of the reformed religion, and in 'the substantial parts of divine worship.' The answer of the prelates was, the case being so, makes 'all that 'follows the less considerable, and the less reasonable to 'be stood upon, to the hazard of disturbing the peace 'of the church.' So the first sentence from their lordships was to betray the temper with which they had entered on this business. Well might Baxter say, that he had yet to learn that questions concerning church government, the soundness of a liturgy, and the scriptural character of ceremonies, were questions about which only a diseased conscience could be troubled. Were they indeed light matters, why should those who feel difficulty in respect to them be accounted disturbers of the church, and not those rather who persist in imposing them in defiance of such feeling? Which was the greater offender, Nebuchadnezzar who enjoined obedience, or Daniel who refused it? But you assume that you are right. On what ground have you so done, said the sturdy presbyter, that is not our ground as much as yours? We *should* be as competent to judge concerning such questions as yourselves, and we think we are so.

Care about
Christian
liberty, and
a pious
ministry.

In compliance with the earnest solicitude of Baxter, the ministers had urged that pious congregations should not be subjected as such to reproachful or hard usage, and should be allowed to hold their private meetings among themselves for their edification, so long as they

* Baxter's *Life*, 248-259. *Documents*, 39-63. Collier's *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 873.

should be only supplementary to the ordinary 'church assemblies,' and be subject to the approval of their pastors.* The bishops say that they also wish to see an end to the use of all scornful words among Christians, and would have private families left to perform their devotions in their own way, but so as not to 'leave a gap open to sectaries, and private conventicles.' By this language, said Baxter, we are clearly to understand, that all religious exercises in private houses, except between members of the same family, are forbidden. To restrict our liberty to such an extent, is to restrict it to the utmost extent possible, and to deny that freedom to people who meet to worship God, which is ceded to people who meet 'in ale-houses, or 'taverns, or fields, or under pretence of horse-racing, 'hunting, bowls, and other occasions.'

The ministers further urged, 'that each congregation 'might have a learned, orthodox, and godly pastor 'residing amongst them,' to discharge his duties conscientiously in their midst. Here the bishops professed not to know the sense in which the word 'residing' had been used; and concerning the rest, their lordships saw not what could be done which had not been already done by the law. What we mean by non-residence, said Baxter, every man must know; and what we mean by each congregation having a godly minister will be manifest enough, if the men of that character in the church be removed by imposing new subscriptions upon them, and if 'ignorant and ungodly men are set up in their places.'

* 'This was put in, because the serious practice of religion had been 'made the common scorn; and a few Christians praying or repeating 'a sermon together had been persecuted by some prelates as a heinous 'crime.' Baxter, 231.

BOOK II.

Purity of
commu-
nion.

The ministers also prayed, that no person should be admitted to the Lord's Supper until duly catechized and instructed, nor any person whose 'scandalous life contradicted his profession.' Confirmation, said the bishops, is sufficient for the first object, and the words of the rubric before the communion are sufficient for the second. Whatever confirmation *might* be, said Baxter, it is notorious that the young commonly go to it as to May-games, more than as to a religious duty; and every one knows that the words in the rubric do not give the minister the power in relation to the scandalous communicant which is necessary to ensure the exclusion of such persons from that service.

The Lord's
day.

Let the sacredness of the Sabbath, said the ministers, be more strictly enforced. The law in England on that subject, said the bishops, is stricter than in any foreign reformed church. Yet our law, rejoins Baxter, is so wide as to have left room for the Book of Sports, and for the expulsion of ministers from their livings for refusing to read that book from the pulpit! You know how the Sabbath is profaned by the dissolute, or you do not; not to know it can be little to your credit; and to know it, and still to write as you have written, must be still more reprehensible.*

Church go-
vernment.

Concerning government, the prelates declare that, in their judgment, the English hierarchy as formerly existing is, 'for the main, the true and ancient episcopacy.' Nor is this episcopal authority exercised without 'the assistance and council of presbyters,' though not after such a manner as is proposed—a manner which, in the

* 'This was added, because abundance of ministers had been cast out in the prelates' days, for not reading publicly a book which allowed 'dancing and such sports on the Lord's day.' Baxter, 233.

view of their lordships, has no sanction from authority or reason. Then follows an insinuation which betrays the feeling underlying all their objections. This jealousy of power in single persons in the church, it is said, savours too much of that jealousy of power in a single person in the state from which so many evils have come. Of all governments, it is added, 'the government of many' is the most liable to abuse. The loyalty of these simple-minded ministers had brought them into their present trouble, and this was their reward—to be told that they were too democratic to be good subjects! Every instructed divine should know, said Baxter, that the power we claim for presbyters has been claimed for them by scholars of the first eminence. It is ceded to them, moreover, and in the words we have used, in the *Icon Basilike*, a book commonly ascribed to the late king. The bishop known to primitive times was one bishop in one church, not a diocesan bishop with rule over a thousand churches. And 'no knowing English-man can be ignorant that our bishops have *the sole government of our pastors and people*, having taken all 'jurisdiction or proper government (or next all) from 'the particular pastors of the parishes to themselves 'alone.' From this source, says Baxter, our greatest controversies have come. Still, even here, the maxim of the bishops is—no change, no concession.*

* The power given to the bishop by law was great, but, according to Baxter, the power which he could assume without law was much greater. Here are some of the strong words which the pastor of Kidderminster would fain have addressed to their lordships: 'What 'act of parliament ratified your canons? What law imposed altars, 'rails, and the forcing of ministers to read the book for dancing on the 'Lord's days? Or what law did ratify many articles of your visita-'tion books? And did the laws sufficiently provide for all those poor

BOOK II.

The prelates and Usher's Reduction.

Usher's 'Reduction' was very unacceptable to the prelates, and they were disposed to question the authenticity of that document. Baxter has settled that point by stating, that Usher confessed to him, not long before his death, that he regarded the scheme as adapted to satisfy moderate men, and that he had 'offered it to the late king.*' It is in the following terms that Baxter concludes his rejoinder to the answer of their lordships, touching church government—terms which show that he foresaw what was to follow, and was disposed to make the prelates aware that he did so:—

'ministers that were silenced or suspended for not reading the dancing book, or any such things? What the better for the laws were all those who were silenced or driven into foreign lands?' *Defence.*

* Recording elsewhere what took place on this point, Baxter says :
'In this time I opened to Bishop Usher the motions of concord which I had made with the Episcopal divines, and desired his judgment of my terms, which were these. First, that every pastor be the governor as well as the teacher of his flock. Secondly. That in those parishes which have more presbyters than one, one be a stated president. Thirdly. That in every market town, or in some such meet divisions, there be frequent assemblies of parochial pastors associated for concord and mutual assistance in their work, and that in those meetings one be a stated, not a temporary president. Fourthly. That in every county or diocese there be every year, or half year, or quarter, an assembly of all the ministers of every county or diocese, and that they also have their fixed president, and that in ordination nothing be done without the president, nor in matters of common and public concernment. Fifthly. That the coercive power or sword be meddled with by none but magistrates. To this sense were my proposals, which he told me might satisfy for peace and unity among moderate men. But when he had offered the like to the king, intemperate men were displeased with him. I asked him also his judgment about the validity of Presbyterian ordination, which he asserted; and told me that the king asked him at the Isle of Wight where he found in antiquity that presbyters alone ordained, and that he answered, I can show your majesty more, even where presbyters alone successively ordained bishops.' *Baxter's Life*, 206.

‘ Here we leave it to the notice and observation of posterity, upon the perusal of your exceptions, how little the English bishops had to say against the form of primitive episcopacy contained in Archbishop Usher’s “Reduction,” in the day when they rather chose the increase of our divisions, the silencing of many hundred faithful ministers, the scattering of the flocks, the afflicting of so many thousand godly Christians, than the accepting of this primitive episcopacy, which was the expedient which those called Presbyterians offered, never once speaking for the cause of presbytery; and what kind of peacemakers and conciliators we met with, when both parties were to meet at one time and place, with their several concessions for peace and concord ready drawn up, and *the Presbyterians in their concessions laid by all their cause*, and proposed an archbishop’s frame of episcopacy; and the other side brought not in any of their concessions at all, but only unpeaceably rejected all the moderation that was desired.’

CHAP. III.

Baxter’s re-
monstrance.

The language of the prelates concerning the liturgy and ceremonies was in strict accordance with their language on the matter of church government. Their lordships profess that they are ‘not against a revision of the liturgy by such discreet persons as his majesty shall think fit to employ therein;’ but, at the same time, they frankly declare, that in no one of the respects in which change is sought do they see the need of change. The service provided in the Prayer Book is neither too long nor too short. There is nothing in it at variance with the word of God, nothing really exceptionable in its frequent repetitions. It may not be in harmony in all respects with the liturgies of the reformed churches, but we hold it to be much more reasonable, say the prelates,

The liturgy
and
ceremonies.

BOOK II. 'that their forms should be brought into a nearer conformity with ours, than ours with theirs.' Should his majesty concede the demands now made, the effect, it is said, would be to feed discontent rather than to allay it; and to gratify a minority of his subjects by giving offence to the majority. The sum of the statement furnished by their lordships accordingly was—'We heartily desire that no innovations should be brought into the church, or ceremonies which have no foundations in the laws of the land imposed.' And nothing, it was alleged, could be 'too rigorously imposed which is imposed by law, and with no more rigour than is necessary to make the law effectual.'

Baxter, pondering this language, said—You never spoke words more agreeable to your hearts, more expressive of your purpose and policy. So saying, you must mean, either to change the consciences of men, or to compel them to act contrary to their conscience. The first you cannot do, the second you can do only in the case of hypocrites. Have you, then, resolved to send all the honest men among us out of the country, if not out of the world? When the law happens to be in your favour you make it the measure of right. You willingly forget that the blood of the martyrs was shed in the name of law, and that the Inquisition itself takes that pretext along with it. Be it known to you, however, come what may, 'the man who is true to his God and his conscience, will not do that which he taketh to be sin.'

All this, and more, Baxter would have said to the bishops, face to face, had his brethren permitted. We have cited his language, though not uttered at the time, because it reveals the impression made on the minds of

the ministers by the 'Answer' of the prelates. That document left them scarcely a vestige of hope, even in this early stage of these proceedings. In the church, the matters which had contributed so largely to convulse the land with civil war, were all to be retained. Nothing was to be learnt from the experiences of the last twenty years. Everything seemed to say, that the wrongs inflicted on so many conscientious men under Laud, were to be renewed under Sheldon. In explanation of this course of proceeding, it has been said, 'Demands of a Republican tendency having been made by a party, not considerable in number, but acquiring importance from its clamour and turbulence, the public feeling took the alarm, and became insensible to all considerations, except the desire for a strong and permanent government. It was this exclusive desire, pardonable under existing circumstances, and perhaps necessary for the restoration of good order, that inspired the subsequent deliberations both in church and state, and was finally embodied in the Act of Uniformity.'* In refutation of this statement, it is to be remembered that the proceedings related in this chapter belong to the months of July and August, in 1660, and that nothing can be more clear than that the bishops were resolved, even then, on their ultimate policy. What demands of 'a Republican tendency' had been made at that time, it would be difficult to show. To describe the 'proposals' of the Presbyterian divines in such terms would be an abuse of language. The outbreak of the small band of fanatics under Venner, did not take place until some six months later; and that mad proceeding was no sooner known than protested against, not only by Pres-

* Cardwell's *Conferences*, 245.

BOOK II. byterians, but quite as strongly by Independents and Baptists. The truth is, we have evidence enough to show, that Clarendon, and the men most in his confidence, were intent, at this juncture, upon stimulating the unwary into disorder by means of spies, that so the needed pretext, in support of the intended severities, might not be wanting. The only signs of a tendency towards disturbance before the passing of the Act of Uniformity, if we except the Venner affair, were such as had been fabricated by this sinister policy on the part of the government. It is important to bear these statements concerning dates in mind, if our praise or blame in relation to these proceedings is to be justly distributed.



CHAPTER IV.

Concessions by the King—The Declaration from Worcester House.



HE king was not satisfied with the course taken by the prelates. At this stage of the proceedings his majesty interposed, and took upon himself the responsibility of bringing about a settlement on a more liberal basis. The motives of this policy we know only in part. Charles, no doubt, had some remembrance of his promise from Breda; and his love of ease made him desirous of seeing an end of these wearisome discussions. But it is supposed also, that little as the monarch cared about churches of any kind, his preference was with the church of Rome, and that he hoped to find a plea in the liberty granted to the Protestant Nonconformist, that might be used with success in favour of a similar liberty to the Catholic.

The motives of Clarendon, and of his party, were also of a mixed description. Nothing could have been less acceptable to him than the king's intended concessions. But if the Presbyterian leaders might be seduced into conformity by such means, the defection of the

CHAP. IV.

The King becomes a church reformer.

BOOK II. chiefs would detract seriously from the influence of their followers. That party being weakened, and the Convention parliament, in which the Presbyterian element was formidable, being dissolved, a new house of commons, more devoted to the church, might supersede all that had been done by prerogative, by passing measures of a different complexion, which should take with them the higher authority of law. The future was to lay bare this stratagem. It was not easy to detect it at the time.

The new
Declaration.

In the Declaration which the king submitted to the consideration of the Presbyterian ministers, with a view to publication, it is easy to trace the influence of the friends of that party in the court and the cabinet.* Manchester, Broghill, Hollis, and Anglesey were among the lords in communication with the sovereign whose good offices were thus exercised. But the chancellor stood as a powerful impediment in the way of all such tendencies. The tone of the document, however, in which his majesty had resolved to speak to the nation, was much more conciliatory and hopeful than the answer from the bishops.

All history shows, said the king, that the peace of the church is necessary to the peace of the state. In his letter from Breda to the Speaker of the House of Commons, his majesty had declared his steady attachment to the Protestant religion, and his hope to do much that might serve to strengthen and diffuse it. His acquaintance with the churches on the continent should enable him to judge wisely concerning the interests of the church within his own dominions. In Holland, he had held many conferences with divines from this country who were leaders of opinion among the Presbyterians,

* *Baxter's Life*, 259-264. *Documents*, 63-78.

and he had found them loyal, religious, and moderate persons. His intention accordingly had been, to assemble a synod of learned men soon after his return, who should so adjust matters of difference, that a law might be passed which should be in accordance with his promised liberty to tender consciences. The state of opinion, however, had not become so settled as to be favourable to the intended meeting of a synod, and it now appeared to his majesty to be expedient that, by the exercise of his best thought for the purpose, certain terms should be laid down, on which the much-desired agreement might be realized. Certain preliminaries being thus understood, action of a more formal, and of a legislative kind, might follow with safety and advantage. The king repeated his expressions of sincere adhesion to the English church, and hoped that the changes which he was prepared to sanction, in compliance with the wishes of those who were desirous of change, would only tend to strengthen the claims of that church on the affections of all his subjects. When the state was verging towards democracy, it was natural that the church should tend in the same direction; but ‘since, by the wonderful blessing of God, the hearts of the whole nation were turned towards a monarchical government in the state, it must be very reasonable to support that government in the church.’ But his majesty spoke of being confident that the bishops would deem the concessions which, for the sake of peace, he was about to propose, as very just and reasonable.

Let the men invested with the episcopal office, said the king, be always able and pious men, who shall not only be capable of ruling well, but shall often teach; let any diocese accounted too large for a single bishop

BOOK II. have its suffragan bishops ; let the censures of the church be pronounced by the bishop in conjunction with the advice of the presbyters—lay chancellors being no more concerned in such proceedings ; let the deans and chapters be the special assistants of the bishops in ordinations, and in the other exercises of their office ; let confirmation be so regulated as to ensure Christian instruction to the young ; and let the rubric before the communion be so enforced as to ensure, as far as may be, that scandalous persons shall not approach the Lord's table ; let every bishop be apprized that he is not to exercise any arbitrary power, nor to impose anything on either clergy or people, which is not according to law ; let there be a meeting of divines of different persuasions to make such alterations as may be thought most necessary in the Book of Common Prayer ; and in the meanwhile let the cross in baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, the use of the surplice, and the subscription required on entering upon a benefice, be left optional to those who have scruples concerning them. ' In a word,' said his majesty, ' we do again renew what ' we have formerly said in our Declaration from Breda, ' for the liberty of tender consciences ; ' and if any man has been molested on account of opinions which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom, it has not proceeded from any command of ours.

How the Declaration was received by the ministers.

When this document passed into the hands of the ministers, it was felt that gratitude was due to the king for the concessions made in regard to some obnoxious ceremonies, and for the promise of a representative synod, which should be empowered to deliberate on further revision in that respect. But one of the most exceptionable forms—kneeling at the Lord's table—

remained in force ; the whole, moreover, was so far only a royal grant, and could not be relied upon as permanent until it should be made law by parliament ; and in regard to the important matter of discipline and government, nearly everything remained, in reality, in a condition little satisfactory. The words before the rubric of the communion were not sufficient to enable the minister to guard the Lord's table against the presence of the scandalous ; and the provision, that the bishops should exercise their functions in confirmation, and in respect to discipline in particular congregations, with the advice of the presbyters, would do little towards placing the government of the flock in the hands of the pastor, unless the word 'advice' in relation to his acts should be substituted by the word 'consent.' It must be left to him to say, in the first instance, who is in a fit state to be confirmed, or to come to the communion, if he is not to be utterly powerless in respect to discipline. In truth, Baxter still despaired of a settlement ; and persuaded himself, that as the worst would surely come, it would be wise in the Nonconformists to state their case fully and boldly, and to abide the issue, leaving their conduct to the judgment of their friends and of posterity. It was under this impression, that, at the request of his brethren, he drew up a paper, showing in what respects the Declaration was defective, and must be altered, if it was to become a basis of harmony. But this paper was so free in its tone, that the author was assured, by his most influential friends, that it could not be presented. Some of its passages, accordingly, were erased, and others were modified.*

* Baxter's *Life*, 'Our Petition to the King,' &c., 265-273. 'This petition being delivered to the lord chancellor, was so ungrateful,

BOOK II.

The meet-
ing at
Worcester
House, Oct.
22.

The king now appointed a day on which he would meet representatives of both sides, and would consider impartially the statements they might be prepared to submit to him. The place of meeting was Worcester House, the residence of the chancellor. Among the persons present were Sheldon, bishop of London; Morley, bishop of Worcester; Hinchman, bishop of Salisbury; Cosins, bishop of Durham; Gauden, afterwards bishop of Exeter; Hacket, bishop of Coventry; Dr. Barwick, dean of St. Paul's; Dr. Gunning, and many other notables. The noblemen present included Albemarle, Ormond, Manchester, Anglesey, and Hollis. The ministers bring up the old names: Reynolds, Calamy, Ash, Manton, Spurstowe, Wallis, and Baxter. 'The business of the day was not to dispute, but as 'the chancellor read over the Declaration, each party was

'that we were never called to present it to the king. But instead of 'that it was offered us, that we should make such alterations in the 'Declaration as were necessary to attain its end; but with this 'caution, that we put in nothing but what we judged of flat necessity.' On this, the ministers drew up a brief statement of 'Alterations of the Declaration,' containing, not all they desired, but the things which they conceived might be reasonably expected as concessions. The substance was, that care should be taken to ensure that the ministers of the church should be competent and religious men; that the Lord's day should be religiously observed; that the bishops should exercise their functions in connexion with the advice and consent of the presbyters; that there should be suffragan bishops in every diocese; that the confirmation of the young should be only with the consent of the pastor; that the pastor should have power to exclude the scandalous from the Lord's table; that all impositions by the bishops shall be restricted to things which may be legally imposed; that the use of the Book of Common Prayer be, for the present, left optional—especially the use of the cross in baptism, kneeling at the sacrament, the observance of holidays, bowing at the name of Jesus, and wearing the surplice. *Ibid.* 275-276.

‘to speak to what they disliked, and the king was to
‘determine how it should be.’* CHAP. IV.

The great hindrance at this meeting came from one word. The ministers claimed that the bishop should not confirm the young, ordain priests, or pronounce spiritual censures, without the consent of the presbyters. The king, knowing the feeling of the prelates on that point, would retain the word ‘advice,’ and would not substitute the word ‘consent.’ Consent, said Baxter, is a small word, but in this connexion it is not a word of small meaning. We know the feeling of our brethren and of our flocks on this point, and if our divisions are to be healed, and not to be made wider, that word must, in our judgment, be ceded. The pastor must be the rector over his own flock in reality, and not in name only; and the higher government of the church must be by the joint action of bishops and presbyters, and not by bishops alone. If this principle is not to be admitted, then all the old evils may be expected to return. Something was said also concerning the *jus divinum* pretensions of the prelates, and their repudiating Presbyterian ordination, but the most significant incident came from another source.

Difficulty about the word ‘consent.’

The chancellor, having read through the Declaration, ‘drew out another paper, and told us that the king had
‘been petitioned by the Independents and Baptists, and,
‘though he knew not what to think of it himself, and
‘did not very well like it, yet something he had drawn
‘up, which he would read to us, and desire our advice
‘about it. Thereupon he read, as an addition to the
‘Declaration, *that others also be permitted to meet for
‘religious worship, so be it they do it not to the disturb-*

The toleration difficulty.

* Baxter’s *Life*, 276.

BOOK II.

'ance of the peace.'^{*} The reading of these words was followed by a long silence. 'Don't speak,' said a cautious friend in the ear of Baxter; 'leave it to the bishops.' But the bishops spoke not. They watched the snare, and gave no sign. The pen of Baxter was that of a ready writer, and his tongue was often like it. He mused; said to himself, to be silent will be to give consent, and that will never do. He thought he saw that it would be possible to make the bishops parties with the Presbyterians in taking exception to this proposal. Dr. Gunning had just before spoken of Papists and Socinians, as sects to be discountenanced; and Baxter now broke the silence by reminding the meeting of what 'that reverend brother' had said, and then added, 'For our parts we desire not favour to ourselves alone, and rigorous severity we desire against none. As we humbly thanked his majesty for his indulgence to ourselves, so we distinguish the tolerable parties from the intolerable. For the former, we humbly crave just lenity and favour; but for the latter, such as the two sorts named by that reverend brother, we cannot make their toleration our request.' Charles said, 'There are laws enough against the Papists.' Yes, said Baxter; but the question, I presume, is whether those laws shall be enforced or not. It was now seen, that for the present nothing could be done. The business ended at this point.

Baxter left this gathering of magnates at the chancellor's much depressed. His conclusion was, that henceforth he must be a Nonconformist, and be content to suffer with the many who would soon be reduced to that condition. His chief solace was, that if the Presbyterians were to be expelled, it could not be said to have

* Baxter's *Life*, 277.

been because they had insisted that the church of England should be made Presbyterian. They had not made any such demand. They had simply prayed that its episcopacy might not remain popish and arbitrary; that it might become primitive, legal, and limited.

But the interval of two or three days brought sunshine after the cloud. Passing one of the streets of London, Baxter heard the king's Declaration cried about for sale. He eagerly purchased a copy, and stepped into a house to read it. To his great surprise and delight, he found that, in relation to the pastoral authority, the word 'consent' had been inserted, in the place of 'advice;' and saw that many other alterations which the ministers had urged, and apparently in vain, had been adopted. So great, indeed, was the restraint laid on the episcopal authority in this revised document, that, in the view of Baxter, no man who had taken the Covenant needed to hesitate about accepting it. The concessions made did not embrace all the Nonconformists desired, but it came to them at a moment when the experience of some months past had forbid their expecting anything at all so good. Baxter was on his way to the lord chancellor when he purchased this paper in the street; and, on seeing his lordship, he thanked him most cordially for what had been done. Let the revision of the Prayer Book be such as was promised, and let that revision become law, and he should feel bound to use his utmost influence to induce his brethren to remain in the church, and to give it all the spiritual efficiency possible.*

During some weeks past, the rumour had been prevalent, that certain leaders among the Presbyterians

CHAP. IV.

The revised Declaration, Oct. 25.

The offer of the bishoprics.

* Baxter's *Life*, 278, 279.

BOOK II. might expect bishoprics if they would conform. Before the first draft of the king's Declaration had been drawn up, a meeting took place, in which Morley, Hinchman, and Cosins on the one side, and Reynolds, Baxter, and Calamy on the other, had indulged in much rambling discourse together, with a view to some terms of agreement, but with no definite result. In that conference, though the bishops present were bishops elect only, none of them being consecrated, the Presbyterians addressed them as 'my lords;' on which Morley observed that he supposed their lordships might use that language in return; 'from which,' said Baxter, 'I perceived they had some purpose to try that way with us.'*

The bishops, no doubt, knew the 'purpose' of the government on that matter. Some days later, Baxter was made aware that the bishopric of Hereford was in reserve for him. Reynolds was offered the see of Norwich. Calamy, that of Coventry and Lichfield. It was easy to see, that such had been the antecedents of these men, that their conformity, even on these terms, would be at some cost of character, and that a loss of character to the Presbyterian leaders would be a loss of power to the whole party. No one of the three was likely to have accepted this overture on the basis of his majesty's Declaration as it originally stood. But the case became much altered when the revised instrument was made public. Even then, the rumour that their friends were likely to become bishops, called forth loud protests from the more zealous Presbyterians in London. Many deprecated the rumoured compliance in the case of any one of the three. It was true, Reynolds had often said that he regarded all forms of church government as

* Baxter's *Life*, 274.

matters of expediency, and Baxter was known to have been always in favour of a moderate episcopacy. Conformity on their part, accordingly, would be less mischievous. But Mr. Calamy had been so far committed to the other side, that such a course in his case, it was said, would be so great a scandal, that no man could be expected to place the slightest confidence in the professions of a Presbyterian again if it should take place. 'Whatever is done by us,' said Calamy, 'let it be done together.'

Baxter advised Reynolds to accept the offer, but suggested that it might be prudent to wait until the Declaration should become law, or at least to state that his consent was given in full expectation of that event. To Calamy he could give no counsel. His own conclusion was to decline the proffered dignity. The episcopacy of the Declaration, though greatly moderated, was still diocesan, which he utterly disapproved. It was still probable that many good men would be silenced and expelled, and it would be an ungrateful office to carry such measures into effect, and to rule over the sort of men who were likely to come into their place. The Declaration, too, was simply a royal announcement, and might not become law. The duties of a diocesan, moreover, if faithfully discharged, would leave but little time to be given to authorship or study. On these grounds Baxter decided not to be a bishop. Had he decided otherwise, his place in English history would have been something widely different from that which he now holds. To the chancellor he deemed it enough to say, that he judged it would be in his power to do more service to the church by continuing a parochial minister than by accepting a bishopric. Reynolds came

BOOK II. promptly to a different conclusion, but assured Baxter that it should be with an avowal of the sort of condition which he had suggested. If any such declaration was made, it was forgotten when the crisis came in which it should have been acted upon. Reynolds continued bishop of Norwich through the many evil days which followed. He was a devout and estimable man. He died in 1676. Calamy suspended his answer until the future character of the established church was determined. He then made the better choice.*

The London ministers thank the King for his Declaration.

At a meeting of the Presbyterian ministers of London, it was proposed that an address of thanks should be presented to his majesty for his gracious Declaration. Some men of reputation hesitated concerning the propriety of such a proceeding, the episcopacy recognized even in that instrument being, in their judgment, inconsistent with the oath they had taken in relation to the Covenant. Baxter reasoned earnestly with those who avowed such scruples. It was to be remembered that, according to the Declaration, the prelates could no longer impose anything on clergy or people without the sanction of the law of the land; that they could no longer exercise their higher jurisdiction without the counsel and assistance of a presbytery; and that no person could be presented for confirmation, or be present at the communion, without the *consent* of the pastor. From these changes, taken along with some others, the episcopacy of the church of England in the time to come would be an institute different in its nature from the old prelacy which obtained before the late troubles. In addition to which, not only the use of the surplice, but kneeling at the sacrament, and other exceptionable observances,

* Baxter's *Life*, 281-283.

were now left optional; and the promise concerning the entire revision of the liturgy was as fair and hopeful as could be expected. In the end the ministers addressed his majesty, making mention of these gracious concessions, expressing their earnest gratitude, and their hope that the future of the church may be tranquil and prosperous.*

CHAP. IV.

What was the effect of this Declaration? No part of it ever became in any perceptible degree either law or usage. Nevertheless, says Baxter, three things came from it. So much of concession went forth to the nation with the name of the king attached to it, which sufficed to show sober men that our wishes could not be so unreasonable as some other men were disposed to insinuate. Further, the persecuting laws pending over all Nonconformists were restrained during another year. Finally, we had a conference with a view to an amicable settlement, which, though it ended in the falsification of every promise that had been made to us, gave us occasion to state our case fully and freely to the men who were to become our oppressors, and to satisfy our people that we had acquitted ourselves faithfully on their behalf. The men who were parties to the promises from Breda, had concluded that a liberal course of proceeding to that extent would be a necessary condition of their restoration to power. But they soon discovered that a less equitable policy might be safe; and they had not the virtue to resist the temptation, but became as sectarian, as treacherous, and as revengeful as circumstances would permit. Such is the sum of Baxter's judgment on affairs at this juncture.† We shall see that this policy of the bishops, which was indicated with so much decision in

The Declaration a failure.

* Baxter's *Life*, 284-285. *Documents*, 101-104.

† Baxter's *Life*, 287, 288.

BOOK II. the summer of 1660, was to continue to the crisis of 1662.

Popular
feeling.

While these discussions were taking place between leading men, the people at large shared in the excitement. By this time, it seems, the word 'Presbyterian' had come to be very much what the word 'Puritan' had been long before—a term of reproach cast on every one who made the least pretension to seriousness or principle. Noblemen and others in parliament, who pleaded for a lenient treatment of Nonconformists, were all branded as Presbyterians, though, in fact, they were most of them advocates of episcopacy, only wishing to see it somewhat restricted and reformed.*

Scandals
among the
clergy.

The cavaliers had done much to make licentiousness the mark of the sound royalist and of the true churchman; and the Restoration did much more in the same direction. Many of the clergy, especially of the old sequestered clergy now restored, became almost incredibly scandalous in their conduct. Reports of their profaneness, drunkenness, and debauchery were heard everywhere. Baxter laments that he should have lived to see the time in which scarcely any vice was accounted so criminal as the possession of a scrupulous conscience touching religious conformity.†

* Baxter's *Life*, 278.

† *Ibid.* 288, 289.



CHAPTER V.

The Case of the Nonconformists in the Conference at the Savoy in 1661.

IT will be remembered that the concessions made in the king's Declaration had respect mainly to church government. Certain ceremonies were left optional; and while it was the wish—not the command—of his majesty, that the Book of Common Prayer should not in any case be wholly laid aside, the minister was left to make his selections from it according to his discretion. All this, however, was for the present, and only preliminary to the promised meeting of learned men to revise that volume, omitting some parts, or supplying others, so as to adapt the whole, as far as possible, to the existing state of feeling. Many Nonconformists were earnest in pressing that this meeting should be promptly convened. One thing only, they said, is now needed to ensure peace and amity. Let there be a satisfactory revision of the liturgy, and let that revision become law, and our troubles will be at an end.

CHAP. V.
Preliminaries to the meeting at the Savoy.

The commission issued for this purpose appointed

BOOK II.

The com-
mission.

March 25.

twelve prelates on the one side, and twelve divines, to represent the Presbyterians, on the other. The Non-conformist representatives were nominated by Dr. Reynolds, now bishop Reynolds, and by Mr. Calamy. To ensure a full attendance at each meeting, nine assistants, on either side, were also named to supply the place of any number of the twelve who should be absent.

The service required from this commission was, ‘To
 ‘ review the Book of Common Prayer, comparing the
 ‘ same with the most ancient liturgies which have been
 ‘ used in the church in the primitive and purest times ;
 ‘ and to that end to assemble and meet together, from
 ‘ time to time, within the space of four calendar months
 ‘ next ensuing, in the master’s lodgings in the Savoy, in
 ‘ the Strand, in the county of Middlesex, or in such
 ‘ other place or places as shall be thought fit or con-
 ‘ venient, to take into your serious and grave considera-
 ‘ tion the several directions, rules, and forms of prayer,
 ‘ and things contained in the said Book of Common
 ‘ Prayer, and to advise and consult about the same, and
 ‘ the several objections and exceptions that shall now be
 ‘ raised against the same. And, if occasion be, to make
 ‘ such reasonable and necessary alterations, corrections,
 ‘ and amendments therein, as by and between you and
 ‘ the said archbishop, bishops, doctors, and persons
 ‘ hereby required and authorized to meet and advise as
 ‘ aforesaid, shall be agreed upon to be needful or expe-
 ‘ dient for the giving satisfaction to tender consciences,
 ‘ and the restoring and continuance of peace and unity
 ‘ in the churches under our protection and government.’*

When the commissioners assembled, the archbishop

* Wilkins’s *Concilia*, iv. 570-572. Baxter’s *Life*, 303-305. Cardwell’s *Conferences*, 298-302.

of York, being the highest dignitary present, was the first to speak. But it was simply to say that he knew little of the matter; that the bishop of London, Dr. Sheldon, was much better acquainted with the mind of his majesty than himself, and could best explain the exact object before them. Sheldon at once said, the prelates had not sought this conference. It had been convened in deference to those who desired alterations in the liturgy; and as neither himself nor his brethren had any changes to propose, they could have nothing to say until the nature and extent of the changes required by others should be submitted to them. In brief, as at the meeting of the last year, the demand of their lordships was, that the ministers should present the whole of their exceptions to the liturgy, and their proposed amendments, at once, and in writing. The divines had a painful remembrance of what had resulted from that course of proceeding on a former occasion. They reminded his lordship that the royal commission required them to meet together for the purpose of advice and consultation, and that by a free interchange of thought, after that manner, they might come to understand each other, and reach some conclusion, but that nothing could be less promising than the substitution of a correspondence in the place of a conference. It would be, in fact, a violation of the spirit and letter of the instructions. But these remonstrances availed nothing. Sheldon insisted that the 'exceptions, alterations, and additions' should all be given in at once, and in the form required.

Baxter, to the surprise of his brethren, concurred with Sheldon on this point; but for very different reasons. Our opponents, he said, hope to find that we are of widely different judgments on the points at

CHAP. V.

The prelates take the course of last year again.

Baxter differs in judgment from his brethren.

BOOK. II. issue. By communicating with them in the way proposed, we can best show how largely we are agreed. The amendments on the existing forms, moreover, and the additions we wish to make to them, cannot be presented otherwise than by writing. In oral discussion, too, there would probably be some unadvised and rash speaking; and, above all, every dispute conducted in that form is sure to be more or less misrepresented, and it became them to be able to show to their congregations, and to the coming time, how they had acquitted themselves in a service of so much difficulty. In the end, the ministers assented, but not without fear that the old policy would be acted upon, and that the reply of the bishops, on thus becoming acquainted with the exact nature and extent of their wishes, would consist as before, of a series of reasons against complying in any of the instances mentioned. To ensure the intended ejection, two things were needed—to know the concessions deemed indispensable, and to take care that no such concessions should be made.*

Baxter's
exceptions
to the Book
of Common
Prayer.

On retiring from this meeting, certain divines undertook to prepare a paper setting forth the exceptions commonly taken to the Book of Common Prayer by Nonconformists. Baxter engaged to supply such additional or new services as should seem to him desirable. His complaints in relation to the disposition of the material, and to portions of the material itself, in the Prayer Book, were many, few of them being without an appearance of reason, though some might well have been passed over. In its method, or rather no method, its repetitions, and in other particulars, the book was shown to have come from the accidents, more than from any

* Baxter's *Life*, 305, 306.

natural growth, of the past. Baxter's composition, in consequence, grew into a new liturgy, though he never spoke of it as such, and was far from expecting to see it adopted in place of the old. But it would suffice to show the kind of service with which Presbyterians might be expected to be satisfied; and he was not without hope that portions of it might be so far accepted as to be left optional to those who should prefer them to the older forms. Special exception was taken to the regeneration doctrine in the baptismal service.*

In the document under the title of 'Exceptions,' which was finally agreed upon, and given in on the 4th of May, the ministers commence by expressing their gratitude to his majesty, who had shown himself so much disposed to respect their convictions; and their earnest hope that the prelates would be found to be no less 'tender of the church's peace,' and no less willing 'to bear with the infirmities of the weak.'† The compilers of the English liturgy were men of eminent worth and sanctity, but it was hardly to be supposed that the first step in reformation had been taken so perfectly as to be properly the last. By many that work was deemed imperfect from the beginning, and the sense of that imperfection had become much wider and deeper through the nation in more recent times. We hold, they say, that the 'limiting of church communion to 'things of doubtful disputation has been in all ages a 'ground of schism and separation;' and that the desire

The joint
'Exceptions'
from the
ministers.

* Baxter's *Life*, 306, 307-316.

† *Ibid.* 316-336. Baxter says, that in these meetings of his brethren, whatever 'seemed to make the Prayer Book odious,' or to savour of 'spleen or passion,' was rejected from whatever quarter it came. P. 307.

BOOK II. to avoid all unnecessary offence to the conscience of Papists, which led the reformers to retain many things they would otherwise have discarded, has made it to be simply reasonable that a regard to unity and strength among Protestants in these later times, should lead to a reconsideration of such doubtful usages. The general exceptions taken relate to the translation of the Scriptures followed in the Book of Common Prayer; to the reading of lessons from the Apocrypha; to the instruction concerning the observance of Lent and holidays; to the limitation on free prayer; to the parts of the service which suppose all the worshippers to be regenerated; to the disorderly manner in which the collects are introduced; to the many defects in the volume in respect both to confession and petition; and reference is made, among some less weighty matters, to the presumption and impolicy of precluding all persons from the worship of God who are not reconciled to the use of the surplice, to the cross in baptism, or to the custom of kneeling at the Lord's Supper. They seek change in these respects and others—

‘ Because these ceremonies have, for above a hundred
 ‘ years, been the fountain of manifold evils in this
 ‘ church and nation, occasioning sad divisions between
 ‘ ministers and ministers, as also between ministers and
 ‘ people; exposing many orthodox, pious, and peaceable
 ‘ ministers to the displeasure of their rulers, casting them
 ‘ on the edge of penal statutes, to the loss, not only of
 ‘ their livings and liberties, but also of their oppor-
 ‘ tunities for the service of Christ and his church; and
 ‘ forcing people either to worship God in such a manner
 ‘ as their own consciences condemn, or doubt of, or else
 ‘ to forsake our assemblies, as thousands have done.

‘ And no better fruit than these can be looked for from
 ‘ retaining and imposing of these ceremonies, unless we
 ‘ could presume that all his majesty’s subjects should
 ‘ have the same subtlety of judgment to discern even to
 ‘ a ceremony how far the power of man extends in the
 ‘ things of God, which is not to be expected ; or should
 ‘ yield obedience to all the impositions of men con-
 ‘ cerning them, without enquiring into the will of God,
 ‘ which is not to be desired.

‘ We do therefore most earnestly entreat the right
 ‘ reverend fathers and brethren, to whom these papers
 ‘ are delivered, as they tender the glory of God, the
 ‘ honour of religion, the peace of the church, the service
 ‘ of his majesty in the accomplishment of that happy
 ‘ union which his majesty has so abundantly testified his
 ‘ desire of, to join with us in importuning his most
 ‘ excellent majesty, that his most gracious indulgence as
 ‘ to these ceremonies, granted in his royal Declaration,
 ‘ may be confirmed and continued to us and our poste-
 ‘ rities, and extend to such as do not yet enjoy the
 ‘ benefit thereof.’

On the passage in the commission which required
 them to compare the English liturgy ‘ with the most
 ‘ ancient liturgies used in the church in the purest and
 ‘ most primitive times,’ the ministers say, ‘ We cannot
 ‘ find any records of known credit, concerning any
 ‘ entire forms of liturgy, within the first three hundred
 ‘ years, which are confessed to be the most primitive
 ‘ and purest ages of the church ; nor any impositions of
 ‘ liturgies upon any national church for some hundreds
 ‘ of years after. We find, indeed, some liturgical forms
 ‘ fathered upon St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and St.
 ‘ Ambrose, but we have not seen any copies of them,

What the
 Noncon-
 formists said
 about an-
 cient litur-
 gies.

BOOK II. 'but such as give us sufficient evidence to conclude
 'them wholly spurious, or so interpolated, that we
 'cannot judge what there is in them of any primitive
 'authority.'

The Excep-
 tions em-
 brace small
 things and
 great.

Passing from these 'generally expressed desires,' to the more definite statement of their 'exceptions,' the divines are careful to remark, that some of the proposed changes are more verbal than material; and that some others would not have been named had it not been felt that they were blemishes which should be removed from the services of an establishment of so much dignity and authority as the church of England. But the remaining matters are said to be of a more grave description, consisting of things deemed corrupt, and contrary to the word of God—things, moreover, which have been often censured as such, not only by private persons, but by some of the most learned men both of the English and reformed churches. It cannot be said that these things belong to 'the essentials of public worship,' and if not, on what ground of reason can the enforcement of them in such circumstances be wise or charitable?

Exceptions
 to vest-
 ments.

The rubric required that the minister should use such ornaments in the church as were in use in the second year of Edward VI. The exception taken here was, that this language seemed to bring back the cope, the albe, and other popish vestments, condemned in the service book published by authority of parliament in the sixth year of that prince. It was said that, where there is singing, the Lessons, the Epistles, and the Gospels should be sung to a plain tune. The exception here was, that the Lessons, Epistles, and Gospels are neither psalms nor hymns, and that the distinct

The inton-
 ing of the
 Lessons.

reading of them would conduce much better to edification. The rubric on the communion said, let those who 'intend to be partakers signify the same to the curate 'over night.' The change required here was, that longer notice should be given to the minister, and that he should have power to exclude the 'notorious evil liver,' until he shall repent, and make a credible profession of his faith. After the creed, it was said, 'if there be no sermon, one of the homilies shall follow.' We desire, said the ministers, that preaching here shall not be left so indifferent. In the communion, the communicant was required to kneel; and the old objection to that usage was again urged. It was also enjoined that every parishioner should communicate at least three times a year. Let it rather be enjoined, it was said, that the service shall be administered three times a year, if there be communicants, but let there not be any necessity of communion laid upon the people, as that would often be to impose a religious service on the irreligious.

Concerning baptism, it was urged that the minister should not be compelled to baptize indiscriminately, but be left to restrict that service to the children of parents who at least are not scandalous in their lives. To the usage concerning godfathers and godmothers it was objected, that the natural sponsors in such cases were the parents, and the weighty promises made by others on such occasions were known to be a mockery. The baptismal regeneration doctrine was rejected, because, say the Nonconformists, 'We cannot in faith say, that every 'child that is baptized is "regenerated by God's Holy Spirit;" at least it is a disputable point, and, therefore, we desire it may be otherwise expressed.' The

CHAP. V.
Pastoral discipline.

Preaching.

Kneeling at the communion.

Periodical communion

On baptism.

BOOK II.

The Catechism.

sign of the cross was, of course, a matter of exception. On the catechism it was urged that the reading should not be, 'Wherein I was made a member of Christ, the 'child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of 'heaven.' But rather as follows:—'Wherein I was 'visibly admitted into the number of the members of 'Christ, the children of God, and the heirs of the kingdom of heaven.'

Confirmation.

In respect to confirmation, the rubric enjoined that the pre-requisites to that service on the part of the young should be ability to repeat the Articles of the Belief, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and to answer questions on the catechism. The ministers were not satisfied with such *memoritor* qualifications, but required that the pastor should see to the more adequate instruction of the candidates, and that, according to his majesty's declaration, 'confirmation be rightly and 'solemnly performed, by the information, and with the 'consent of the minister of the place.' The prayer before the imposition of hands reads, 'Thou hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the 'Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them the forgiveness 'of all their sins.' The divines here say, 'This supposes that all the children who are brought to be confirmed have the Spirit of Christ, and the forgiveness of 'all their sins, whereas a great number at that age have 'committed many sins since their baptism, and do show 'no evidence of serious repentance, or of any special 'saving grace; and, therefore, this confirmation, if administered to such, would be a perilous and gross abuse.*'

* The prayer after Imposition of Hands reads thus:—'We make 'our humble supplication to thee for these children; upon whom, 'after the example of thy holy apostles, we have laid our hands, to

Exceptions no less grave were taken to the language of the rubric in the Visitation of the Sick. In this service, the Prayer Book says, ‘Here shall the sick person ‘make a special confession; after which confession the ‘priest shall absolve him after this sort: Our Lord Jesus ‘Christ, etc., and by his authority committed to me, I ‘absolve thee.’ Here it was pleaded, that the absolution should be left to be pronounced or not, as the minister should see occasion; and that the form of absolution should be declarative and conditional only—‘I pronounce thee absolved, if thou dost truly repent and believe,’ instead of ‘I absolve thee.’ In regard to the Communion of the Sick, it was prayed that the minister should not be obliged to administer the sacrament to such, except as he may judge it to be expedient and fitting so to do.

CHAP. V.
Visitation
of the Sick.

In the Burial Service were these words: ‘Forasmuch ‘as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to ‘take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed; we therefore commit his body to the ground in ‘*sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life;*’ words, say the Nonconformists, ‘which cannot in truth ‘be said of persons living and dying in open and

The Burial
Service.

‘certify them, by this sign, of thy favour and gracious goodness towards ‘them.’ Concerning which the ministers say, ‘We desire that the ‘practice of the apostles may not be alleged as a ground of this imposition of hands for the confirmation of children, both because the ‘apostles did never use it in that case, as also because the Articles of ‘the Church of England declare it to be a corrupt imitation of the ‘apostles’ practice. We desire that imposition of hands may not be ‘made, as here it is a sign to certify to children God’s grace and ‘favour towards them, because this seems to bespeak it a sacrament, ‘and is contrary to that forementioned XXVth Article, which saith ‘that “confirmation hath no visible sign appointed by God.”’

BOOK II. 'notorious sins.' Here is what is called the first prayer in this service: 'We give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world; that we, *with this our brother, and all other departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss.*' Well might the ministers say, 'These words may harden the wicked, and are inconsistent with the largest rational charity.' So in the last prayer: 'That, when we depart this life, we may rest in him, as our hope is this our brother doth.' The comment here is: 'These words cannot be used with respect to those persons who have not, by their actual repentance, given any ground for the hope of their blessed estate.'

Summary
—Baxter's
liturgy.

Such was the case of the Nonconformists at the Savoy, in 1661. On church government, they accepted the concessions which had been made by the king, though falling much below their desire on that point; and if the more material of the changes now proposed in the liturgy should be granted, they were prepared to continue ministers of the English church. In the liturgy drawn up by Baxter, we see one of the many signs of weakness in the history of that eminent and estimable man. Such, however, was his influence with his brethren, that they were induced to give in that document, with a brief preface to it by themselves. But this was not done until after they had presented their exceptions.* And in the preface they were careful to

* 'When the exceptions against the liturgy were finished, the brethren often read over the reformed liturgy which I offered them. At first they would have had no rubric or directory, but bare prayers, because they thought our commission allowed it not. At last, they yielded to the reasons I gave them, and resolved to take them in. But, *first*, to offer the bishops their exceptions.' Baxter's *Life*, 333.

remind the bishops, that the royal commission had required them to exercise their discretion, not only in revising or omitting matters contained in the Book of Common Prayer, but in supplementing it, so far as might seem to be expedient, with new forms. In submitting these new forms, the ministers say, ‘ We have here accordingly added some rules or directions as requisite to give light to the whole, showing when and how these several parts shall be used. But if any of these rules or directions, upon debate, shall be judged by the commissioners unnecessary, or over long, we shall be very ready to submit either to the alteration or omission of them. And since we, for our parts, do so freely profess not to insist on anything now or formerly proposed, which shall be manifested to be unmeet ; so we humbly crave and hope for your consent to all the rest ; and that these alterations and additions now offered may find your favourable interpretation and acceptance, and may, by our joint consent, be presented to his majesty, to the end they may obtain his gracious approbation ; and the several particulars thereof may be inserted into the several respective places of the liturgy to which they belong, and left to the minister’s choice to use the one or the other, according to his majesty’s gracious Declaration concerning ecclesiastical affairs.’*

In the preface from which this extract is taken, the ministers of course speak conjointly, and nothing, on the whole, could be more cautious, moderate, or reasonable than their language. Their highest hope concern-

* *The History of Nonconformity, as it was Argued and Stated by Commissioners on both Sides, appointed by His Majesty King Charles II., in the year 1661.* 1708. Pp. 52, 53.

BOOK II. ing these new forms evidently was, that some portions of them might be inserted along with the old, and that both might 'be left to the minister's choice, to use the one or the other.' But, in fact, the new liturgy—these 'additional forms and alterations,' as they were called by the ministers—appears to have been regarded, on both sides, as being more a private than a public document. So much so, that in the elaborate reply from the bishops to the 'exceptions,' there is not a word of allusion even to the existence of this offspring from the too active brain of Mr. Baxter. The 'exceptions' embraced the main points at issue, and the discussion was restricted to them.*

The Petition for Peace.

In another paper, intitled 'The Petition for Peace,' the pen of Baxter was more wisely employed.† In this address, presented to their 'most reverend fathers,' the bishops, along with the proposed reformation of the liturgy, the ministers say, 'We speak to you as humble 'petitioners, as well as commissioners, on the behalf of 'these yet troubled and unhealed churches, and of many 'thousand souls that are dear to Christ; on whose

* Baxter compiled his liturgy in a fortnight, and then found his brethren only on the threshold of their labour about the 'exceptions.' The exceptions, as stated above, were given in on the fourth of May. It is some time after the twentieth, that Baxter says, 'When the 'brethren came to examine the reformed liturgy, and had often read 'it over, they passed it, at last, in the words in which I had written it, 'save only that they put out a few lines in the administration of the 'Lord's Supper, where the word *offering* was issued; and they put out 'a page of reasons for infant baptism, thinking it unnecessary; and 'they put the larger litany into an appendix, as thinking it too long; 'and Dr. Wallis was desired to draw up the prayer for the king, which 'is his work, but after, somewhat altered by us.' *Baxter's Life*, 334.

† *Baxter's Life*, 334. *The History of Nonconformity*, 27-51. *Documents relating to the Settlement of the Church of England*, 176-200.

‘ behalf we are pressed in spirit, in the sense of our
‘ duty, most earnestly to beseech you, as you tender the
‘ peace and prosperity of these churches, the comfort of
‘ his majesty in the union of his subjects, and the peace
‘ of your souls in the great day of your accounts, that,
‘ laying by all former and present exasperating and
‘ alienating differences, you will not now deny us your
‘ consent and assistance to those means that shall be
‘ proved honest, and cheap, and needful to those great,
‘ desirable ends, for which we all profess to have our
‘ offices and lives.’

They begin by expressing emphatically their hopes that the use of some of the forms which they have submitted may be left to ‘ the minister’s choice, to use at his discretion.’ They do not venture to ask for more. But as ‘ some hundreds of able, holy, faithful ministers are of late cast out,’ and great spiritual destitution has come by that means on multitudes of people; they plead earnestly, that the men who have been ordained by parochial pastors may not be required to submit to reordination; that the amended polity, and the reformed liturgy, promised in his majesty’s Declaration, may be granted; and that the negligent and scandalous in the ministry may be substituted by others better qualified for their office. Let these things be settled, and their hearts would be filled with thankfulness, and the land would be enriched ‘ by the increase of holiness and peace.’ We shall take the boldness, they say, ‘ to second these requests with many of our
‘ reasons, which we think should prevail for your con-
‘ sent; choosing rather to incur whatsoever offence may
‘ be taken against our freedom of expression, than to be
‘ silent at such a time as this, when thousands of the

BOOK II. 'servants of the Lord, who are either deprived of their
 'faithful teachers, or in fear of losing them, together
 'with the freedom of their consciences in God's worship,
 'do cry day and night to heaven for help, and would
 'cry also in your ears with more importunate requests
 'had they but the opportunity we now have.'

Then follows a series of reasons, intended to show the justice and expediency of this liberal policy. The province of the pastors of the church, it is said, is to feed the flock; condescending, if needs be, to its weakness, and bearing with it. The Lord of the harvest commanded the apostles to pray that more labourers might be sent into his harvest; and can it become their successors to doom many thousand souls to a want of the bread of life, by driving able and pious men from their cures, because they have scruples in respect to certain 'forms or ceremonies, or to reordination?' It is alleged that the things to which this conformity is exacted are things indifferent. But to the Nonconformist they are *not* indifferent; and on which side must the greater fault be—with those who say they cannot conform to such things, because they believe them to be sinful, or with those who insist upon enforcing them, while describing them as indifferent? The penalties incurred by Nonconformity demonstrate the sincerity of the Nonconformists; and the pretence, that to bear with scruples at all, must be to bear with them without end, is not language to be expected from the lips of wise men—'use necessary things as necessary, and unnecessary as unnecessary, and charitably
 'bear with the infirmities of the weak, and tolerate the
 'tolerable, while they live peaceably, and then you will
 'know when you have done.'

Further,—is there any comparison to be made between the value of such ceremonies, and the worth of the many souls which will probably be lost, as the consequence of such rigorous proceedings? ‘If it be said, that other ‘men who will conform to the things in question may ‘convert and save souls better than those that are ‘factious and disobedient, we first humbly crave that ‘reproach may not be added to affliction, and that none ‘may be called factious that are not proved such; and ‘that laws imposing things indifferent in your judgment, ‘and sinful in theirs, may not be made the rule to judge ‘of faction.’ This would be to make men offenders, ‘by the making of laws and canons that must force ‘them to be such; consequently, Daniel was an offender ‘—the law which he must break was made to make ‘him a breaker of the law. Take away the law, and ‘take away his fault. We accuse none of like intentions; but we must say, that it is easy to make any ‘man an offender, by making laws which his conscience ‘will not allow him to observe.’ With regard to the competent men who are said to be ready to come into the place of the ejected, the fact that they are men for whom nearly everything is to be done, scarcely anything being left to their discretion, does not bespeak a very high confidence in their wisdom or ability. To say that a man shall conform to these ceremonies or not be allowed to preach, is to make such observances of more importance than preaching, and is that to leave them among things indifferent? Order there must be, but small things should not be imposed with disproportionate penalties; and the vital functions of the church should not be made to give place to things which are of no necessity. So did these good men reason; and they go

BOOK II. on to say, 'We humbly crave that we may not in this
 'be more rigorously dealt with, than the pastors and
 'people of the ancient churches were. If we may not have
 'the liberty of the primitive times, when, for aught
 'that can be proved, no liturgical forms were imposed
 'on any church; yet, at least, let us have the liberty of
 'the following ages, when, *under the same prince, there*
 '*were diversity of liturgies, and particular pastors had*
 '*the power of making and altering them for their par-*
 '*ticular churches.'* The fact thus adverted to was sig-
 nificant. In this manner, the prelates were reminded,
 that in respect to ritual, Protestantism, in their hands,
 was about to become a greater bondage, and not a
 greater liberty, as compared with Romanism!

Much was said to show that the demand of reordina-
 tion was a novelty in the history of the church, and
 to expose the unreasonableness of assuming that nothing
 but perversity of temper could preclude men from
 seeing alike in matters connected with religious worship.
 Much also to show, that error in this respect was at
 least as likely to belong to those who were zealous in
 the imposition of such things, as in those who were
 firm in resisting them. The widely different course
 taken by an inspired apostle in relation to such diver-
 sities of judgment some sixteen centuries ago was laid
 open with much intelligence.* The expulsion of large
 numbers of conscientious and holy men for such a cause
 would be a triumph to the irreligious and profane;
 would convert the joy which came with the return of
 his majesty into bitter mourning in the experience of
 myriads of his subjects; would perpetuate all the old
 feuds; and could hardly be expected to bring honour

* Romans xiv.

to their lordships in the estimation of the reformed churches or of after ages, or to find favour at the last in the presence of their Divine Lord. In conclusion, they say, ‘ We are petitioners for those who are faithful to God and the king; who fear offending; who agree with you in all things necessary to salvation and to the common union of believers; and whom you are likely to see at Christ’s right hand, who will finally justify them and take them to glory. We have now faithfully, and not unnecessarily or unreasonably, spread before you the case of thousands of the upright of the land. We have proposed honest and safe remedies for our present distractions, and the preventing of the feared increase. We humbly beg your favourable interpretation of our plain and earnest language, which the urgency of the cause commands, and your consent to these our necessary requests; which, if you grant us, you will engage us to thankfulness to God and you, and to employ our faculties and interests with alacrity to assist you for the common peace.’*

Bearing in mind the antecedents of these men—their long-avowed convictions, their practices and habits during many years past, we see not what concession

* ‘ I was desired, if it were possible, to get audience for the “Petition,” before all the company. Some were against it, and so they would have been generally, if they had known what was in it. But, at last, they yielded to it. But their patience was never so put to it by us, as in hearing so long and ungrateful a petition.’ Baxter’s *Life*, 334. Baxter says, ‘ The generality of the bishops and doctors’ never knew what the papers were which had been submitted by the Nonconformists, except, as in the instance of this petition, where the document had been ‘ read openly to them.’ ‘ So that it seems, before they knew what was in our papers, they resolved to reject them, whether right or wrong, and to deliver them up to their contradictors.’ *Ibid.* 335.

BOOK II. they could be expected to make which they had not made. Men whose loyalty had been so well attested, and who had taken so conspicuous a part in restoring the king, might reasonably have claimed that much more should have been ceded to them. They were commissioners in common with the prelates; they were in no way inferior to their lordships in ability, in learning, or in weight of character. But they place themselves in the attitude of petitioners to their colleagues and equals, and in that attitude they urge their suit by every consideration adapted to influence the judgment, the humanity, or the conscience of intelligent and Christian men. With what effect this was done we shall see in the next chapter.



CHAPTER VI.

Policy of the Bishops in the Conference at the Savoy in 1661; and its Exposure by the Nonconformists.

THE Savoy conference was restricted to four months. Three of those months had passed before the prelates returned their Answer to the Exceptions which the ministers had submitted to them. The High Church party knew the juncture to be such, that in their case, to gain time was to gain power. On the whole, the answer which came from the prelates now was a faithful repetition of the answer which had come from them the year before. The bishops alleged, that according to their instructions, they were to admit such changes only as should be proved to be 'necessary,' and as should, in consequence, be 'agreed upon.' Their answer was, that none of the changes proposed had been shown to be of that nature, and that none of them accordingly could be allowed. Their paper was described, indeed, as making concessions, but it was seen at a glance that these were few and trivial, verbal rather than material. To many this issue was simply such as had been expected. To many it was the occa-

CHAP. VI.

Reply of
the prelates
to the Ex-
ceptions of
the minis-
ters.

BOOK II. sion of disappointment and sorrow. But while this was the drift and substance of their reply, their lordships made some attempt, in this document, to exhibit reasons for their decision, and returned a sort of answer to the 'exceptions' *seriatim*.

Rejoinder
from the
ministers.

The ministers resolved that the discussion should not terminate at this point. Baxter was requested to prepare a rejoinder. He hastened at once to the house of his good brother, Dr. Spurstowe, in the village of Hackney, and shut himself up to his labour during the next eight days. He then appeared before his brethren with a document, which, printed in ordinary pica type, would extend to some hundred and fifty octavo pages. The sections of the 'Answer' are transcribed, fully and fairly, in their order, and the 'Rejoinder' deals with them one by one. Walls, bastions, gates—whatever the bishops have reared in their defence, all are levelled to the ground, or shattered into fragments, by the artillery directed against them. We do not say the shot are never beside the mark, or that there is no waste of ammunition, but the execution done is, upon the whole, masterly and complete. We shall not be expected to attempt even an epitome of this elaborate production. But the substance of portions of it should be given, as serving to show the sort of argument with which the bishops were content to defend their cause; and to show, moreover, the nature of the reasoning which made Nonconformists in that day, and which has sufficed to make men such from that day to the present. With this view we shall pass over the matter which has a personal tinge upon it, and does not bear directly on the great principles which separated the two parties from each other.

The divines ventured to remind the prelates that it

became them, as the professed successors of the apostles, to imitate those holy men by showing themselves tender of the peace of the church, and careful to heal her differences. The answer to this appeal was in four lines :
 ‘ For preserving the church’s peace, we know no better
 ‘ nor more efficacious way than our set liturgy, there
 ‘ being no such way to keep us from schism as to speak
 ‘ all the same thing, according to the apostle.’

CHAP. VI.

How to
 secure peace
 to the
 Church.

We submit, say the ministers, that the liturgy would not be less conducive to concord if the parts of it which are the cause of our present divisions were revised or removed. Our complaint is, that in its present state it is not adapted to your proposed end. Further, by speaking ‘ the same thing,’ do you suppose the apostle intended the speaking of your liturgy, or of a liturgy of any kind? If you mean to say the apostles used a liturgy, we demand the proof of that statement. If so precious a relic as an apostolic liturgy really existed, we desire to know by what strange means it fell into disuse, became lost, so that no portion of it can be recovered? The fact that *we* know nothing of such a composition is proof that the apostolic age knew nothing of it. Had it existed, the apostles, in their endeavours to heal the dissensions in the early churches, would surely have appealed to it. But they make no such appeal. To say, as is sometimes said, that those were the times of miraculous gifts, and that rubrical aids were little needed, is to grant our conclusion, viz., that liturgies were unknown in the primitive church. We must add, that if the time was to come in which an exact liturgy would be indispensable to the security of faith and order, can we suppose that the apostles, in their inspired foresight of the needs of the church, would have failed to supply

Liturgies
 unknown
 to the pri-
 mitive
 church.

BOOK II. such assistance? And if they had done so, is it not clear that the church would have had one liturgy, as certainly as one Bible? If it be said that our liturgy 'is ancient, because the *Sursum Corda*, the *Gloria Patri*, 'etc., are ancient,' we answer, if our modern liturgies shall be restricted to the few sentences of that sort which can be traced to a true antiquity, we are Nonconformists no longer: we consent to use them.

Past fruit of the English liturgy.

The next answer of the bishops is an appeal to experience. 'When the liturgy was duly observed,' say their lordships, 'we lived in peace; since that was laid aside, there have been as many modes and fashions of worship as fancies.'

The Nonconformist view on that question.

Pardon us, say the divines, if we interpret such language as betraying a want of charity—an insensibility to the suffering of your brethren. 'You say you lived in peace. But so did not the many thousands who were fain to seek peaceable habitations in Holland, and in the deserts of America, nor the many thousands who lived in danger of the high commission, or bishops' courts at home, and who were so in danger of every malicious neighbour that would accuse them of hearing sermons abroad, when they had none at home, or of meeting in a neighbour's house to pray, or of not kneeling in the receiving of the sacrament.' We should not have reminded you of these things had you not compelled us so to do. Scotland might also say to you, that before your liturgy came among them they had peace, but that afterwards they had no peace. Who does not know that our own inquietude came largely from the determination of our rulers in those days to enforce such observances? And is this the use which is to be made of all our experiences? Have we all suffered so

much, only that you should return to the old course of violence towards men who should be allowed to live in peace? The past has shown how little influence penalties and prisons can exercise over the judgments and consciences of men; and in the face of such a past, can you resolve to return to that policy? Of some you may make hypocrites. Of some you may make exiles. Some may perish under your hand. And what will be the effect of all this upon yourselves? Will this be to show that you are the friends of the people—fathers to the flock? But you say the liberty to dispense with the use of the liturgy bred great divisions in the late times. We say, on the contrary, that ‘it is to us matter of admiration to observe how little discord there was in prayer, and other parts of worship, among all the churches throughout the three nations, which were agreed in doctrine, and forbore the liturgy. It is wonderful to us, in the review, to consider with what love and peace and concord they all spoke the same things, who were tied to no form of words; even those who differed in some points of discipline, even to a withdrawing from local communion with us, yet strangely agreed with us in worship.’

The fourth answer from the bishops is highly characteristic. It is well, say their lordships, to pray for unity, and not less well ‘to labour to get true humility, which would make us think our guides wiser and fitter to order us than we ourselves, and Christian charity, which would teach us to think no evil of our superiors, but to judge them rather careful guides and fathers to us.’

But you must hear the other side, say the ministers. We humbly conceive that it would tend greatly towards the peace of the church if our pastors should be content

CHAP. VI.

The people should be humble, say the bishops.

Would humility be out of place in their superiors.

BOOK II. to be examples to the flock, not as lords over them—not thinking so highly of themselves, nor so meanly of their brethren, as to judge no words proper to be addressed to God in public worship, except such as they have prescribed. Apostles did not so, and humility should prevent their successors from so doing. Some ministers may be weak men, but can it be well that the laws of the church should be framed on the assumption that the weak are the rule, while assuredly they should be the exception? It is easy to say the people should not take upon them to judge concerning the lawfulness of things commanded? But humble men may innocently suppose that their superiors are not infallible; that it is possible they should command what God has forbidden; and they know that in such cases they are bound to obey God, and ‘not to obey man against the Lord.’ The conduct of Daniel shows that ‘absolute obedience must be given to God only, the absolute sovereign.’ We must say, that if the prelates wish to be regarded as the careful guides and fathers of the church, ‘it is not for them to seem wiser than the apostles, and to make those things of standing necessity, which the apostles never so made, nor to forbid those to preach the gospel or to hold communion with the church, who dare not conform to things unnecessary. Love and tenderness are not used to express themselves by hurting and destroying for nothing.’

The bishops will rescind the unlawful only.

The bishops next say—Prove the things to which you take exception to be unlawful. If we hearken to scruples on any lighter ground, ‘order is gone.’

We have said enough, was the reply, to show that the imposition of those things must be unlawful. But your rule here is not reasonable—not charitable. You

could not prove sitting at the Lord's Supper to be unlawful. But would you deem it a light matter to have that form imposed upon you? This is one instance from many like it. Remember the law—'Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye so unto them.'

CHAP. VI.

Their lordships further say—Were we to grant what you require, we should offend 'the soberest and most loyal children of the Church of England,' inasmuch as we should concede, in so doing, that those who have opposed the liturgy in past times were in the right, and that those who have written in its defence were in the wrong.

To revise the liturgy would be to confess their champions in the wrong.

The ministers must have known how forcibly this reasoning had operated through the whole Puritan controversy. But their reply to it was not difficult. 'We seek not,' they say, 'to impose what we offer on others, but can thankfully accept a liberty to use what is to our own conscience unquestionable and safe, while other men use what they like better.' Among those who doubt the lawfulness of an observance, there may be many who would not at once affirm the observance to be unlawful, but who, so long as they are in doubt, dare not be conformists. We use no harsh words concerning those who have defended the liturgy as it is. We grant that their reasoning may have been satisfactory to themselves, though it is not so to us, and it is not necessary that any authority should decide on the difference between us. We simply ask you not to deny to us the liberty you claim for yourselves. If you reject this reasonable proposal, and tell us we *must* conform, our suffering will soon demonstrate whether we account such conformity sinful or not.

BOOK II.

The liturgy
said to be
founded on
scripture
and catho-
lic tradition

The church, say the prelates, ‘has been careful to
‘put nothing in the liturgy but that which is either
‘evidently the word of God, or what hath been gene-
‘rally received in the catholic church.’

The ministers answer—Mr. Hales, whom we pre-
sumed to be a great authority with your lordships, was
evidently of a very different opinion. The expression,
‘generally received in the catholic church,’ is hard to
understand. Taken in any sense, this language is
strangely at variance with the facts of history. In an
appeal to authority in that form, we must insist that
the judgment of the primitive church should take
precedence of ecclesiastical usage when the church had
degenerated from her simplicity and had become cor-
rupt. If you require us to subscribe to the nineteenth
Article, we are there made to say, that ‘as the church
‘of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so
‘also the church of Rome hath erred, not only in their
‘living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters
‘of faith:’ and saith Rogers, on Article twenty—‘They
‘are out of the way who think that either one man, or
‘the pope, or any certain calling of men, as the clergy,
‘hath power to decree and appoint rites or ceremonies,
‘though of themselves good, to the whole church of
‘God. Indeed, if you would have all that corruption
‘brought into our liturgy, and discipline, and doctrine
‘which the Papists, Greeks, and others, do use, who
‘undoubtedly make up the far greater number of the
‘now universal church, you would deserve no more
‘thanks of God or man than he who would have all
‘kings, and nobles, and gentry levelled with the poor
‘commons, because the latter are the greater number.’
In fact, ceremonies have varied everywhere. Wise men

will use them with that large liberty with which the past has used them. CHAP. VI.

Concerning public prayer their lordships say, ‘We heartily desire that care may be taken to suppress those private conceptions of prayers before and after sermon, lest private opinions be made the matter of prayer in public, as hath, and will be, if private persons take liberty to make public prayers.’

The bishops will dis-
counte-
nance free
prayer.

The ministers were greatly moved by this declaration. They appear to have looked in wonder on each other as they said—No free prayer! It has been predicted, they say, that it would come to this, but we have always rebuked the suspicion as unwarranted and uncharitable. But it is even so. All prayer coming from the mind of the preacher is treated as coming from a private person. But if the ministers of religion are not public persons, who are such? Your reasoning, moreover, if consistently acted upon, would require, not only that there should be no free prayer, but that there should be no free preaching. For every one knows, that the venting of private opinions in the sermon is greatly more probable than that they should find expression in the prayer. If men may not be trusted to pray, accordingly, still less should they be trusted to preach. Beside which, in prayer, the minister expresses the mind of the people to God; in preaching he does much more—he professes to deliver the mind of God to the people. If your ministers, therefore, are to be men so little competent to their office that you dare not allow them to pray, in the name of everything consistent do not allow them to preach. We must be permitted to remind you also, that if the existing clergy be not men so feeble as really to need that everything should in this manner be done

BOOK II. *for* them, such a course of proceeding will surely create an order of men who will be of that low and mechanical description. ‘We do, therefore, for the sake of the ‘poor, threatened church, beseech you that you will be ‘pleased to repent of these desires, and not to prosecute ‘them, considering that to avoid a lesser evil—avoidable ‘by safer means—you will bring a far greater evil on ‘the churches, and such as is like to strip these nations ‘of the glory in which they have excelled the rest of the ‘world, even a learned, able, and holy ministry, and a ‘people sincere and serious, and of understanding in the ‘matters of their salvation.’

The prelates hold to catholic consent.

You propose, say the prelates, that ‘the prayers may ‘consist of nothing doubtful, or questioned by pious, ‘learned, and orthodox persons. If, by such persons, ‘you mean those who adhere to Scripture and the ‘catholic consent of antiquity, we do not know that any ‘part of our liturgy hath been questioned by such;’ and no prayers could be devised that would be unexceptionable to persons not of that description.

It required no little patience to deal calmly with such a style of address. The ministers were content to say, we think we are ourselves orthodox; we have questioned many things in your liturgy; and we have shown that we have warrant from Scripture, antiquity, and reason for so doing.

Will not allow that the liturgy is exceptionable.

The bishops next say, to describe the liturgy of the church of England as ‘loading public forms with ‘church pomp, garments, imagery, and many superfluous ‘ties, is gross and foul slander.’

The ministers reply—The words which give you so much offence are, as you know, the words of Mr. Hales, and intended to set forth a great fact, viz., that in

church history, the great schismatics have been, not the Separatists, but the men who have caused separations. Can you show this statement to be untrue? If true, have you nothing to learn from it?

Our reformers, say the prelates, ‘drew up such a liturgy as neither Romanist nor Protestant would justly except against; and, therefore, as the first never charged it with any positive errors, so it was never found fault with by those to whom the name of Protestant most properly belongs, those who profess the Augustan confession.’

The history of their lordships is at fault.

The gross historical ignorance, or something worse, betrayed in these statements, was amply exposed. Then follow some lengthened discussions concerning the hymns to be sung in public worship; the responses in the liturgy; the version from which the lessons should be read; and the injunction as to the observation of Lent, and of saints’ days; matters in which we feel but little interest. But, under a later proposition, the bishops say, that to allow every minister to put in or leave out at his discretion in reading the liturgy, would be to make it void. Upon which the divines answer, ‘You mistake us: we speak not of putting in or leaving out of the liturgy, but of having leave to intermix some exhortations or prayers besides, to take off the deadness which will follow, if there be nothing but the stunted forms. We would avoid the extreme which would have no forms, and the contrary extreme which would have nothing but forms.’

The eighteenth proposition laid down by the divines relates to the seat of church authority, and the right of imposition. It was on this point that the two parties especially tried their strength. The Nonconformists

Seat of church authority, and right of imposition.

BOOK II.

interpret the well-known text: 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' as referring to such a settlement concerning 'time, place, or utensils, as is common to things civil and sacred,' and not as relating to the imposition of ceremonies. But they lay down the following rules as to the seat of power in regard to the church. Coercive power belongs only to the magistrate; the coercive power of the magistrate is over the minister of religion as it is over the physician or philosopher; the power to regulate the circumstantialia of a congregation in respect to time, fitness, and the like, belongs by Divine appointment to the presbyters, or pastors of the congregation; power to determine who shall come to the communion belongs also to the pastors, as the proper judges in the *first* instance; power to regulate the communion of churches belongs to the associated pastors or bishops of those churches assembled in synod; and if the question be, whether the laws of the magistrate, or the canons of the clergy, be agreeable to the word of God or not, that is a point on which the individual conscience must judge. To deny the conscience that right, must be to say, that the obedience of every private person to his superiors should be implicit and absolute; in other words, that man should not be governed as a rational creature, and that the magistrate should be raised, after the manner of Hobbes, into the place of the Deity! Hence, if men will so meddle, under the plea of decency and order, 'with things that belong not to their office, as to institute a new worship for God, new sacraments, or anything forbidden, this is a usurpation, and not an act of authority, and we are bound in obedience to God to disobey them.'

Such is the drift of the reasoning which is spread

over many pages. The bishops, on the other hand, aware that the law was likely to be on their side, insist on the duty of submission to law, and discard every plea of conscience as opposed to law as a form of schism or rebellion.*

CHAP. VI.

But if law must be so inflexible, has charity no office in this matter? 'Charity,' say the bishops, 'will move to pity, and relieve those that are truly perplexed or scrupulous; yet we must not break God's command in charity to them; and, therefore, we must not perform public services indecently, or disorderly, for the ease of tender consciences.' So every statement from their lordships comes round to the same conclusion—no concession. Kneeling at the Lord's Supper, the cross in baptism, the surplice in reading, the doctrinal utterances in the baptismal service, in the confirmation service, in the communion service, in the absolution service, and in the burial service, all must remain strictly as they are; inasmuch, as to dispense with them, or to change them, would be, we are told, to 'break God's command,' and to sink into disorder and indecency! Charity might prompt to such a course, but duty will not allow it!

Why the Bishops cannot be charitable.

Well might the ministers exclaim, 'Oh that you would

* 'Pretence of conscience is no exemption from obedience, for the law, as long as it is law, certainly binds to obedience. (Rom. xiii.) Ye must needs be subject. And this pretence of a tender or gain-saying conscience cannot abrogate the law, since it can neither take away the authority of the law-maker, nor make the matter of the law itself unlawful. Besides, if pretence of conscience did exempt from obedience, laws were useless; whosoever did not list to obey, might pretend tenderness of conscience, and be thereby set at liberty, which, if once granted, anarchy and confusion must needs follow.' *Prop.* 18, § 6. *Ans.* Rule 4. The reasoning of their lordships all runs in this narrow groove.

BOOK II.
 Liberality
 of the Non-
 conformists.

‘ but do all that God allows you, yea, commands you,
 ‘ for these ends! How happy would you make your-
 ‘ selves and these poor, afflicted churches. We are here
 ‘ more conformable and peaceable than you. For
 ‘ example, there is much disorder in the Common Prayer
 ‘ Book, yet we would obey it as far as the ends of our
 ‘ calling require. It would be indecent to come without
 ‘ a band, or other handsome raiment, into the assembly ;
 ‘ yet, rather than not worship God at all, we would
 ‘ obey if that were commanded. We are as confident
 ‘ that surplices and copes are indecent, and that kneeling
 ‘ at the Lord’s table is disorderly, as you are of the
 ‘ contrary. Yet, if the magistrate would be advised by
 ‘ us (supposing him against you), we would advise him
 ‘ to be more charitable to you, than you here advise
 ‘ him to be to us. We would have him, if your con-
 ‘ science require it, to bear with you in this indecent and
 ‘ disorderly way. But to speak more distinctly,—when
 ‘ things decent are commanded, whose opposites would
 ‘ not be at all indecent, there charity, and peace, and
 ‘ edification may command a relaxation. And it is not
 ‘ indecent, disorderly worshipping of God, to worship
 ‘ him without our cross, surplice, and kneeling in the
 ‘ reception of the sacrament. If it were, then Christ and
 ‘ his apostles worshipped indecently and disorderly ; and
 ‘ the primitive church, which used not the surplice, nor
 ‘ the transient image of the cross in baptism (but as an
 ‘ unguent), yea, the church for many hundred years which
 ‘ received the sacrament without kneeling.’ The parlia-
 ment established these ceremonies, the parliament may
 change them, and are your lordships prepared to become
 schismatics and rebels if it should do so ?

Concerning baptism, the bishops reiterate their state-

ment, 'that all children are, at their baptism, regenerated by water and by the Holy Ghost;' and the ministers renew their exceptions to that dogma. The doctrine, both of the Prayer Book and of the Catechism, on this subject, is affirmed to be scriptural. So with confirmation, the visitation of the sick, and the burial service. It is well, say the bishops, that the language of the Prayer Book should be such as it is on these subjects. But the ministers dissent. They do not believe the effect of confirmation to be such as is attributed to it; they do not regard the minister of Christ as authorized to say absolutely, 'I absolve thee;' nor can they see either consistency or truthfulness in the form which requires the clergyman to commit the bodies of those who are known to have died in dissoluteness to the grave, in 'sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life.' The few things ceded by the bishops, at the close of their paper, are small matters, and must have been read with a smile by the Nonconformists. They are a mockery of concession.

Such is the substance of the document in which the Presbyterian ministers vindicated their 'Exceptions' to the English liturgy. The summary we have given will enable the reader to estimate the mental and spiritual characteristics of the men, and to look at the questions in debate in the light in which they were viewed by the disputants on the Nonconformist side in this controversy.

Of the time to which the commission had been limited, less than a fortnight remained, when this paper was read and adopted. The divines, accordingly, pressed their episcopal brethren to grant them a meeting for the purpose of a personal conference, and that their final intention, as to concession, might be known. In the

CHAP. VI.

Baptismal
regeneration
and
other errors.

Uses of the
preceding
summary.

The ministers
press
for a personal
conference.

BOOK II.

meeting which took place some days later, Baxter presented the Rejoinder, as from himself and his brethren, of which an account has been given in this chapter. He saw their lordships were displeased with the largeness of the document, and that feeling was no doubt deepened as the nature of its contents became better known to them.

Artifice of
the prelates.

The ministers ventured to urge, that the few days at their disposal might not be consumed in fruitless debate, but rather in such a pacific dealing with the matter before them as might lead to a conclusion in accordance with his majesty's Declaration. Entreaty of that sort, however, was to be to small purpose. Enough transpired at this meeting to satisfy Baxter that the majority of the men so addressed knew next to nothing concerning the papers which had been placed before them, with the exception of the 'Petition for Peace,' which he had succeeded in obliging them to listen to from his own lips. The understanding between the churchmen evidently was, from the beginning, that there was not to be any material innovation in the old rubric, and that the reading of papers, except in the case of those who were to answer them, would be a waste of time. Their lordships were now invited to a friendly conference on the matters contained in the Nonconformist documents. But they had no word to utter concerning them. They were there to agree to such alterations in the Book of Common Prayer as should be shown to be 'necessary,' and it must suffice for them to say that no such proof in support of the exceptions taken to the liturgy had come before them.

The ministers listened with some astonishment to this language. Baxter, and others in their turn, including bishop Reynolds, entreated the men who so expressed

themselves to pursue a more considerate course. His majesty's Declaration clearly supposed that there were many things in the rubric which might be wisely omitted, augmented, or revised. If that had not been understood, what end was to be accomplished by giving existence to the commission? The bishops demurred to this representation, and insisted that the question before them was not *what* should be altered, but rather, was there *anything* to be altered? The ministers replied, are we not here that something might be done to ease tender consciences; and if your foregone conclusion has been that nothing should be done towards that object, is it not a mockery to have come together at all? But the answer was the same— Prove the necessity. We are here to admit the necessity if proved. 'I told them over and over,' says Baxter, 'that they could not choose but know, that before we could end one argument in a dispute, our time would be expired; and that to keep off from personal conference until within a few days of the expiration of the commission, and then to resolve to do nothing but wrangle out the time in disputing, as if we were between jest and earnest in the schools, was, in the sight of all the world, to defeat the king's commission, and the expectations of many thousands who longed for unity and peace. But we spoke to the deaf.'

The ministers knew that they could add nothing material to the evidence which they had furnished, and that, if proof had been desired, enough had been given. Hence the majority were indisposed to enter upon any new statement of their case. But Baxter prudently reminded them that they were invited to do so, and promised a hearing, and though this invitation might be as hollow as insincerity could make it, should they resolve

BOOK II. to be silent, the report would be, that they had been challenged to a discussion, and had declined the challenge. For this reason, his colleagues consented to enter anew upon their argument. So far, Baxter had foiled the policy of the churchmen. They would not be allowed to say they had sought discussion, and it was refused. But the prelates now fell back upon another artifice.

The bishops will listen, but will not dispute.

Baxter, in his simplicity, began to stipulate that the disputants should speak alternately, and that each should be limited to a given time. But he now found that nothing of that nature was intended. You are the accusers, said the bishops ; it belongs to you to argue. It belongs to us simply to say *yes* or *no* to your conclusions. Baxter replied, with submission, it is we who are defendants, against your impositions. You command us to do such and such things, on pain of being excommunicated, silenced, imprisoned, and undone. We are here to defend ourselves against that cruelty, by calling upon you to show on what authority you perpetrate it. If you refuse this, you give up your cause. We are ready to prove the unlawfulness of your impositions. It devolves on you to prove their lawfulness. ‘ On these ‘ terms we stood with them about two days, and they ‘ would not yield to prove anything at all. At last, I ‘ declared to them that we would do our part, whether ‘ they would do their part or not.’

The discussion is to be by written papers.

At length it was granted that there should be discussion. But now a third device came into requisition. The discussion, it was said, should be with written papers. It was not difficult to see what would be the end of such a course. Doctors Pearson, Gunning, and Sparrow were delegated as disputants on behalf of the bishops ; and Dr. Bates, Dr. Jacomb, and Mr.

Baxter, were deputed by the Nonconformists. But when affairs had reached this point, nearly all the Presbyterians retired. The bishops and their friends, on the contrary, endeavoured to give an aspect of importance to the meetings which followed by being generally present.

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It should be mentioned, also, that more was to come out in these conferences than made its appearance in the written papers. Some of this by-play was not a little characteristic. Baxter described the impositions which the prelates would lay upon the church as sinful. Bishop Cosins took great offence at that word. All churches imposed some services of that nature, could it be charitable to describe all churches as sinful on that account? Baxter answered, that the church in heaven was the only church without sin. Whereupon one right reverend person, bishop Lany, must proclaim his good sense and theological sagacity by exclaiming, ‘Justified persons have no sin, because justification taketh it away.’ ‘But when I answered him (says Baxter) by opening the nature of justification, showing that it took not away the sin, but the guilt, he was confounded, and unsaid all again, and knew not what he said. . . . I granted that a man for a certain space might be without any act of sin. As I was proceeding, bishop Morley interrupted me, according to his manner, crying out with vehemence, “What! can any man be for any time without sin?” And he sounded out his aggravation of this doctrine, and then called to Dr. Bates, “What say you, Dr. Bates, is that your opinion?” “I believe (said Dr. Bates) that we are all sinners; but I pray you, my lord, give him leave to speak.” I began to go on to the rest of my

Personal
altercations.

BOOK II.

‘ sentence, to show the sense and truth of my words ;
 ‘ and the bishop—whether from passion or design I
 ‘ know not—interrupted me again, and mouthed out
 ‘ the odiousness of my doctrine again and again. I
 ‘ attempted to speak, and still he interrupted me in the
 ‘ same manner. Upon that I sat down, and told him
 ‘ that this was neither agreeable to our commission, the
 ‘ common laws of disputation, nor to civil usage, and
 ‘ that if he prohibited me to speak, I desired him to do
 ‘ it plainly, and I would desist, and not by that way of
 ‘ interruption. He told me that I had spoken enough,
 ‘ for I spake more than any one in the company. And
 ‘ thus he kept me so long from uttering the rest of my
 ‘ sentence, that I sat down and gave over.’

Baxter gives this description as an ‘ instance of the odious talk ’ which disgraced these proceedings ; and that the reader may see, he writes, ‘ the kind of men we talked with, and the task we had.’* Truly the churchmen who seem to have spoken most on these occasions did not furnish such an example in respect to intelligence, dignity, or courtesy, as might have been expected from men in such positions.

When much time had been thus consumed, bishop Cosins produced a paper from some person of authority, which was expected to bring the parties out of their present labyrinth. This paper assumed that the matters

Bishop
Cosins's
paper.

* ‘ And a little further touch of it I will give you. When I begged
 ‘ their compassion on the souls of their brethren, and that they would not
 ‘ unnecessarily cast so many out of the ministry, and their communion,
 ‘ bishop Cosins told me that we threatened them with numbers ; and,
 ‘ for his part, he thought the king would do well to make us name them
 ‘ all. A charitable and wise motion ! To name all the thousands of
 ‘ England who dissent from them, and whom they would after perse-
 ‘ cute !’ Baxter’s *Life*, 337, 338.

to which exception was taken were deemed exceptionable on two grounds—as being contrary to the word of God, or as being inexpedient. The latter class were disposed of on the plea, that nothing could be so manifestly inexpedient as a disturbance of the peace of the church on the pretence of mere inexpediency as pertaining to things in her ritual. The discussion was thus narrowed to things deemed contrary to the word of God. Baxter, with his two brethren, Dr. Manton and Dr. Jacomb, supplied a brief answer to this paper, showing that the authority of convocation, in existing circumstances, could not be such as the paper supposed, and stating some of the things which, in the judgment of Nonconformists, were opposed to the law of Holy Scripture. It is contrary to that law, they said, that a minister should not be allowed to baptize without using the sign of the cross ; that no one should be permitted to read or pray, or exercise other parts of his office as a minister, who dares not wear a surplice ; that pastors should be required to withhold the elements of the communion from all persons who dare not receive them kneeling ; that they should be forced to pronounce all baptized persons regenerate ; that they should be required to absolve the un-spiritual, and that in absolute expressions ; that they should be compelled to return thanks for *all* whom they bury, as ‘ brethren ‘ whom God in mercy hath delivered and taken to himself ;’ and that no man should be a preacher who dares not say, in subscription, that there is nothing in the Common Prayer Book, the Book of Ordination, or in the Thirty-nine Articles, that is contrary to the word of God. In all these respects and more, the old rubric was declared to be unscriptural ; and to insist on such regulations, it was said, would be to necessitate a wide

BOOK II.

nonconformity. But it was granted, that no man should become a Nonconformist on the ground of mere expediency. Obedience was to be withheld only when to obey man would be to sin against God.

The scholastic and paper warfare.

Now came the discussion, as it was called, by written papers. This was restricted to the alleged sinfulness of the liturgy, in exacting, as a condition of communion, that the elements should be received kneeling. The Nonconformists maintained that this was to lay down terms of communion with a particular church on earth, which are more strict than the terms of salvation; that is, more strict than the conditions of fellowship with the church in heaven. This, it was asserted, is contrary to the teaching of Scripture, and a wrong to tender consciences, and therefore sinful. All the advantage, says Baxter, that our opponents could hope to gain was to keep up a show of discussion, and to consume time by 'trifling pedantically about the form of arguments.' Baxter deemed it prudent to answer them after their own manner. But anything less satisfactory than the verbal and scholastic wrangling into which both parties now descended cannot be imagined. Of course, the disputants ended where they began, only perhaps with some further loss of temper.

Conclusion
—Address
to the King.

So the Savoy conference came to its close. Nothing, or next to nothing, was to be ceded to the Nonconformists. The bishops and their brethren having the ear of the king and of the government, it was resolved, as far as possible, to counteract their misrepresentations in that quarter. The ministers, accordingly, addressed a 'petition' to his majesty, in which they give a true account of what had been done, or rather not done; and pray that they may be judged by their papers only, or by

such a report of their proceedings as should be attested by themselves. We regret, they say, that ‘ the issue of our consultations is, that no agreements are subscribed by us to be offered to your majesty, according to our expectation ; and though it be none of our intent to cast the least unmeet reflection upon the right reverend bishops and learned brethren who think not meet to yield to any considerable alterations, to the ends expressed in your majesty’s commission, yet we must say, that it is some quiet to our minds, that we have not been guilty of your majesty’s and your subjects’ disappointments, and that we account not your majesty’s gracious commission nor our labours lost, having peace of conscience in the discharge of our duties to God and you.’ Then follows a cautious, but explicit enunciation of the principles by which their conduct had been regulated.

‘ It is granted us by all, that nothing should be commanded us by man, which is contrary to the word of God ; that if it be, and we know it, we are bound not to perform it, God being the absolute, universal sovereign ; that we must use all just means to discern the will of God, and to see whether the commands of man be contrary to it ; that if the command be sinful, and any one, through the neglect of sufficient search, shall judge it lawful, his culpable error excuseth not his doing of it from being sin ; and, therefore, as a reasonable creature must needs have a judgment of discerning, that he may rationally obey, so are we with diligence and care to exercise it in the greatest things, even the obeying of God and the saving of their souls ; and that where a strong probability of sin and danger lieth before us, we must not rashly run on without search ;

BOOK II.

‘ and that to go against conscience, even where it is mis-
‘ taken, is sin and danger to him that erreth. And on
‘ the other side, we are agreed, that in things no way
‘ against the laws of God, the commandments of our
‘ governors must be obeyed ; and if they command
‘ what God forbids, we must patiently submit to suffer-
‘ ing ; and every soul be subject to the higher powers,
‘ for conscience’ sake, and not resist ; that public judg-
‘ ment, civil or ecclesiastical, belongeth only to public
‘ persons, and not to any private man ; that no man must
‘ be causelessly and pragmatically inquisitive into the
‘ reasons of his superiors’ commands ; nor by pride and
‘ self-conceitedness exalt his own understanding above its
‘ worth and office, but all to be modestly and humbly
‘ self-suspicious ; and that he who indeed discovereth any
‘ commandment to be sin, though he must not do it,
‘ must manage his opinion with very great tenderness
‘ and care of the public peace, and the honour of his
‘ governors. These are our principles.’



CHAPTER VII.

Convocation and the Prayer Book.

THE parts taken by the prelates and their coadjutors in the Savoy conference differed considerably. We have seen that Baxter's impression was, that their lordships were agreed from the beginning as to what the result should be; and that, in consequence of that understanding, the papers which had been prepared with so much caution and solicitude by the ministers, were never seen by the majority of the persons who were expected to pronounce a judgment upon them. Sheldon, bishop of London, soon afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, was not present at the meetings more than twice, and took no part in the discussion. But his lordship was generally regarded as choosing to be absent or silent, simply because he had succeeded in settling privately what should be done, or rather not done. Morley, bishop of Worcester, was fully of Sheldon's judgment, and was, moreover, a chief speaker; and the reader has seen something of his manner in that capacity. Hinchman, bishop of Salisbury, was always ready to aid his brother,

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The Episcopals in
the Savoy
Conference.

BOOK II.

the bishop of Worcester, avowing the same high church principles, and evincing the same resolution in support of them. But he spoke more calmly, slowly, and less often. Dr. Cosins, bishop of Durham, brought his ecclesiastical and patristic lore into the dispute, but his reasoning and his sagacity fell so far below his learning, that his influence on the proceedings was not great. Of all the commissioners, Dr. Gunning was the most frequent and the most effectual speaker, and no man took higher ground against the Nonconformists. His passionate attachment to some mediæval ideas, and to a ritual symbolism in worship, led him into many rash expressions. The reader will be pleased to learn, that Dr. Pearson is admitted by his opponents to have ‘disputed accurately, soberly, and calmly,’ so as to have seemed to warrant the impression, that, could he have taken his brethren along with him, ‘all would have gone well.’ It is just also to add, that Dr. Gauden, little scrupulous as he could sometimes be in the use of his pen, was really a moderator in these debates. He did not, we are told, bring much either of logic or learning to the matters under consideration, but he had ‘a calm, fluent, and rhetorical tongue,’ and if all had been of his mind, says Baxter, ‘we should have been reconciled.’ Bishop Sanderson, too, was desirous of a comprehension, but he was ‘outwitted’ by men who desired nothing of the kind. The Nonconformists found that to make a favourable impression on two or three minds availed them nothing; the less liberal party were sure to ‘come in at the end,’ and to frustrate everything. So foregone was the conclusion of these meetings supposed to be, that such zealous partisans as Dr. Heylin, Dr. Hacket, Dr. Barwick, and Dr. Sparrow, did not attend at all, or

scarcely at all. King, bishop of Chichester, was never seen; Warner, bishop of Rochester, was present once or twice, but said nothing; and Walton, bishop of Chester, uttered a few irrelevant words only. Bishop Reynolds spoke much on the first day in favour of concession, and afterwards uttered a word occasionally in that strain. 'He was,' says Baxter, 'a solid, honest man, but through mildness, and an excess of timid reverence towards great men, was altogether unfit to contend with such opponents.' The cause of the Presbyterians rested mainly with Baxter and Dr. Bates.*

The writs convening the parliament of 1661 were sent forth on the 9th of March. The commission which originated the Savoy conference was issued on the 25th of that month. The 10th of April arrives, and the question is still asked—Is there not to be any meeting of the houses of convocation? The old constitution required that the writs convening the two houses of parliament should be accompanied by a mandate from the archbishop of Canterbury convening the two houses of convocation. The convention parliament, assembled in the spring of the preceding year, was strongly Presbyterian, and an ecclesiastical assembly brought together at that time must have been of the same character. Even now, the difficulty in that respect was not wholly at an end. Several hundred incumbents had been displaced to make room for the sequestered clergy still living. But in many districts the suffrage of the majority would not have been in favour of men prepared to re-establish the old episcopacy. How was this impediment to the policy of the bishops, and of their friends in the government, to be removed? For this purpose, it

Hesitation
about sum-
moning
convoca-
tion.

* Baxter's *Life*, 363, 364.

BOOK II. appears to have been determined, that whenever such a course might be quietly and safely taken, all ministers who had not been episcopally ordained should be excluded from voting in the election of members to convocation. It was presumed that by this means the election of persons of a safe description would be generally secured. With a convocation thus packed, and a house of commons elected at such a juncture, the most reactionary churchman might hope to see his largest wishes realized.*

Policy of
Charles and
Clarendon.

Nevertheless, here was the Savoy conference engaged professedly in a revision of the liturgy—in a revision of it to be submitted to a convocation and a parliament thus summoned. Had it been the expectation of the king and of Clarendon that a revision satisfactory to the Nonconformists would find favour in those assemblies? We are disposed to think that his majesty had once entertained thoughts of that nature. But we are satisfied that Clarendon neither intended nor expected any such result. He had concurred so far in the more lenient policy of the king, partly in the hope of destroying Presbyterianism by seducing its leaders from fidelity to their avowed principles, and partly in the expectation of realizing a power in a new house of commons, and in a convocation constituted like the present, to which even the king would see it expedient to submit.

Convoca-
tion sum-
moned.

While many incumbents were interdicted from voting, others abstained voluntarily from the exercise of that right. In the judgment of the latter class, to do anything towards giving existence to a convocation on the ancient platform was to stand committed to the old prelacy, and to the old order of things in church and

* Baxter's *Life*, 333.

state. In London, it seems, the ordination of the Presbyterian divines was not challenged. The greater number, too, appear to have exercised their franchise, and they proved strong enough to return Baxter and Calamy as their representatives. But the bishop of London, according to an old usage, could choose two out of four, or four out of six, from among those elected in a certain circuit, and in the exercise of this privilege his lordship descended to pass over the names of Baxter and Calamy, selecting two other names in their place. Well might Baxter be reconciled to this piece of partiality and injustice. 'How,' he remarked, 'should I have been baited there! What a place I should have had in such a convocation!' No good, however, could have followed from his being allowed to take his seat. The fencing between himself and his opponents would have had its place in history, but the course of events would not have been disturbed by it.

A month had passed since the writs summoning a new parliament were issued, when the aged primate, Dr. Juxon, was instructed to send his mandate to the clergy to meet in convocation. Still, nearly a month remained before the men of the new house of commons could look each other in the face in St. Stephen's. The clergy, accordingly, had ample time for attending to all the preliminaries necessary to their meeting in due form. Sincere and fervent, no doubt, were the congratulations which passed between peers and commoners as they met once more in the lobbies, and took their places once more on the benches, of the upper and lower house; and not less jubilant was the greeting between the ecclesiastics who assembled at the same time under the roof of the St. Paul's of that day. None of the old pomp

Meeting of
Convoca-
tion and
Parliament.

BOOK II. was omitted by the triumphant churchmen, as they passed in procession towards that edifice; and their hearts, we may be sure, were filled with emotions, none of them of a feeble sort, as the peal of the organ, and the loud *Te Deum*, reminded them of what had passed away, and of what had returned.

League and
Covenant
burnt—
Summer
convocation

Within a fortnight after its meeting, the parliament ordered that the League and Covenant should be publicly burnt by the hangman, a proceeding in which all grades of Nonconformists must have seen a prophecy of the future. The motion on this subject in the commons was carried by a majority of two to one. The numbers were 228 against 103. Meanwhile, the Savoy conference, which had commenced some six weeks before, was to be protracted through its allotted period of four months. So long as these deliberations were in process the houses of convocation could do little. The pretence, that the divines at the Savoy were to prepare a materially revised liturgy to be approved by convocation and parliament, was a mere pretence; but as that insincere policy had been entered upon, it was expedient that the forms of carrying it through should be observed. One of the first acts of convocation was to draw up a form of prayer for the 29th of May, the anniversary of the birth of the king, and of the restoration of the monarchy. From the increase of 'Anabaptism' of late years, a form for adult baptism was introduced, in the innocent expectation that heresy of that nature was about to disappear under the sway of the ancient church. Something was done also towards revising some of the canons. But these were small matters.

When the convocation reassembled in the following November, the Savoy conference had come to an end,

and the two houses felt themselves free to enter upon their important labours. After the rising of convocation and parliament in the summer, the bishops, we are told, applied their minds vigorously to a revision of the liturgy.* A commission from the king to the archbishop of York, authorizing the convocation of that province to consider and agree upon the subjects presented to them, had been granted in the previous July; and on the 22nd of November, royal letters were issued to the same archbishop, requiring the synod to review the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. ‘But his majesty requiring all possible expedition, and this northern synod considering they were too far distant for consulting with the Canterbury convocation, and that the sending dispatches to London, and receiving them from thence, would take up too much time; for this reason the upper and lower house agreed to make proxies, to transact in their names, with the province of Canterbury; obliging themselves to abide by their vote, under the forfeiture of all their goods and chattels.† The archbishop of York, and three northern bishops, wrote to the convocation of that province to name their proxies without delay. In a private letter, his grace says, ‘If we have not all from you by the end of next week we are lost.’‡

This arrangement being completed, eight bishops were appointed as a committee to revise the liturgy, and to send—amended or altered—portions of it from time to time to the two houses, to be considered by them. Each of the houses possessed the right of proposing amendments, and several alterations were sent up to the

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Convoca-
tion in the
autumn.

* *Collier*, ii. 887.

† *Joyce's Sacred Synods*, 708.

‡ *Kennet's Register*, 564.

BOOK II. bishops from the lower house. So anxious were the prelates to bring this service to a speedy conclusion, and so assiduous had their lordships been in this work during the recess, that by the 23rd of November a moiety of the Book of Common Prayer, with their corrections, was delivered to the prolocutor of the lower house, 'with an injunction that they should proceed to 'examine it with all possible expedition. The lower 'clergy were not surpassed in zeal and promptitude by 'their superiors. Three days afterwards, when the 'bishops had finished their labours, and placed the 'second moiety in the hands of the prolocutor, the 'clergy of the lower house delivered back the first 'portion, together with their schedule of amendments. 'With labourers so earnest and so friendly, the whole 'work was speedily completed. A new preface was 'adopted, the calendar was reconstructed, a form of 'prayer provided for use at sea; and on the 13th 'of December a committee, consisting of members of 'both houses, was instructed to make a diligent examination and last revision of the whole book, incorporating some new collects which had been read and 'approved in the same session. Little now remained to 'be done. A form of words for subscribing the book 'was drawn up in committee, and approved by the 'house; and finally, on the 20th of December, 1661, 'the Book of Common Prayer was adopted and subscribed by the clergy of both houses of convocation, 'and of both provinces.*

* Cardwell's *Conferences*, 371, 372. The lower house had not been in the secret of the revisions going on during the recess, and the delay of some weeks was occasioned chiefly by the amendments sent up to the bishops from that quarter.

The reader has seen what the exceptions against the liturgy were to which the Nonconformist divines attached the greatest weight. The alterations now made in the Prayer Book, considerable and inconsiderable, are said to have amounted to about six hundred. It would have been strange, and, we may add, very impolitic, to have made so many changes, and all of a character to show that the one rule guiding the innovators was a determination to cede absolutely nothing to the scruples of their opponents. In some of the smaller modifications we certainly seem to trace the influence of the recent discussions. But on all the main points, the difficulties of the Nonconformists were not only ignored, but the general effect of the revision of 1662 was to make the book more than ever exceptional to the consciences of such men. The sacramental and sacerdotal elements, beginning with Baptism, and ending with the Visitation of the Sick and absolution to the dying, became only more mediæval and popish than before. Five of the eight bishops on whom this revision chiefly devolved had been commissioners in the late conference; and the prelates and leading divines at the Restoration were nearly all men who had come into public life under the rule of Laud, and had imbibed more or less of the sentiments of his school. In Gunning, Cosins, Wren, and some others, tendencies of that nature were notorious.* ‘The distress of the

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The revision of the
Prayer Book
in 1662.

* In the prayer for the 30th of January sent forth by these bishops in 1661, was the following passage:—‘We beseech thee to give us all
‘ grace to remember and provide for our latter end, by a careful and
‘ studious imitation of this thy blessed saint and martyr, and all other
‘ thy saints and martyrs that have gone before us, *that we may be made*
‘ *worthy to receive benefit by their prayers*, which they in communion
‘ with thy church catholic offer up unto thee for that part of it here
‘ militant, and yet in fight with and danger from the flesh.’ The con-

BOOK II. 'episcopal church during the usurpation,' says a high church authority, 'had more than ever endeared her to her genuine children, and the hand which inflicted the discipline served to abate all undue Protestant zeal. A revision, therefore, of the liturgy being called for, the revisors seized the opportunity (contrary to what the public was reckoning upon) to make our formularies not more puritanical, but more catholic. They effected this, without doubt, stealthily; and, to appearance, by the minutest alterations: but to compare the communion service as it now stands, especially its rubrics, with the form in which we find it previously to that transaction, will be to discover that, without any change of features which could cause alarm, a new spirit was then breathed into our communion service.*' What was thus true in relation to the communion service, was true in relation to nearly every other, except where the bad was so bad that it could hardly have been made worse.

After describing what was now done, another high church authority has said—'It will be observed that in this long communication there is no mention of any of those characteristic points which had been the subjects of strife and division in the church from the earliest days of Puritanism; that the use of the Apocrypha, the expressions complained of in the litany, and in the services for baptism, marriage, and burial; the rubric with regard to vestments, the kneeling at the communion, the cross in baptism, the ring in marriage, the declaration as to infants dying immediately after bap-

vocation was prudent enough to erase this language. Cardwell's *Conferences*, 388.

* Knox's *Remains*, i. 54.

‘tism, the absolution for the sick, though some of them, slightly modified, continued in principle the same. All these, and several others, had been virtually withdrawn by the royal Declaration of October, 1660; and some of them had been abandoned by the bishops in the Savoy conference.* Such was the effect of the flush of confidence which had come with the meeting of the houses of convocation and of the new parliament! The assertion, that the Nonconformists had been unreasonable in their demands, and had lost ground in consequence in public estimation, is without warrant. It had been known from the beginning that the Presbyterians could not consistently claim less than they had claimed, and that concessions far below such as they had been led to expect would have satisfied them. But so faithless and bitter was the course now taken, both in convocation and in parliament, that many changes were made which it was well known ‘could not fail to be galling to them. The substitution of “church” for “congregation,” the

* Cardwell’s *Conferences*, 386. ‘Those matters about which the Puritans scrupled were now made more prominent, and a coherence and a systematic consistency were now for the first time given to those sacerdotal and sacramental theories which had previously existed in the Prayer Book only in an embryotic condition; and certain dogmas, which, by the moderation of the reformers, had been couched in vague and general terms, were now expressed in ample and emphatic phraseology.’

‘The names of the Romish, or black-letter saints had been omitted from the reformed calendar in the reign of Edward. From 1549 to 1603 the Prayer Book contained no mention of any post-apostolical persons or events, with the exceptions of St. George and St. Lawrence. In 1604 and 1662, however, the legendary store-houses of Rome were ransacked, and the feelings of the Puritan party were wantonly outraged by the insertion of *more than sixty* of the mythical and semi-historical heroes of monkish legend.’ *The Liturgy and the Dissenters*, by the Rev. Isaac Taylor, M.A.

BOOK II. 'specific mention of bishops, priests, and deacons, instead
 ' of a more general designation, the reintroduction of
 ' Bel and the Dragon into the calendar, and other similar
 ' alterations, though none of them new in principle,
 ' seemed designed to convince the Nonconformists that,
 ' *instead of any wish to admit them to further power or*
 ' *privilege within the church, there was a distinct and*
 ' *settled desire to restrain and exclude them.* So strongly
 ' did they themselves feel this conviction, that it was
 ' proposed on their behalf, in the house of lords, that
 ' the existing liturgy should be continued, and all the
 ' corrections made in convocation should be abandoned.'*

Summary. It is simply natural that the ministers of religion should be zealous religionists. The ark is entrusted specially to their hands. It becomes them to guard it with solicitude and firmness. The episcopal clergy, moreover, had passed through some bitter experiences of late, such as no class of men in the same circumstances could be expected wholly to forget. Hence we are prepared to make a large allowance in their favour, should their conduct betray feelings tinged considerably with resentment. It is evident there were church of England divines at the Restoration who were not disposed to make a harsh use of their returning power, but would have assented to somewhat liberal concessions, in the hope of burying the painful memories of the past. But this better class were a minority. The strength of their party was not with them. Such men must have seen, that while much had happened to excuse some signs of partiality, and even of injustice, on the part of their brethren, nothing had happened to warrant them in descending to the artifice and insincerity which had

* Cardwell's *Conferences*, 387, 388.

characterized their proceedings, in resolving to learn absolutely nothing from all the bitter fruits of our religious controversies during the last hundred years ; and, least of all, in deciding to grant nothing to the men to whom they had promised not long since to grant almost anything. The leaders in the Savoy conference, and in the convocation, were deep in this treachery. It was bad enough that resentment should become cruelty. It was worse that cruelty should become fraud. ‘ Now ‘ we know their minds, we will make them all knaves if ‘ they conform.’ ‘ Pity you have made the door so ‘ strait,’ was a later observation. ‘ Not at all,’ was the reply ; ‘ had we supposed so many would have conformed, we would have made it straiter.’ Such are the words attributed to Sheldon, the master spirit in these proceedings. But we do not need these words to reveal the temper of that evil hour. The language of the deeds then done is fully to that effect. More honourable men would have resisted the stream ; but they were appalled by it, and it was allowed to flow on.*

* In a volume, consisting partly of printed papers, and partly of MSS., preserved in the Library of the Congregational Church, George Street, Plymouth, is a manuscript letter from a person who was present at the Savoy Conference towards its close, in which is this sentence:— ‘ The prelates would yield nothing, but the whole quorum of them entertained Mr. Baxter’s reasonings with hisses.’ As this is from an eye witness, it is entitled to some credit, but I know of no other authority on the point.



CHAPTER . VIII.

Parliament and the Act of Uniformity.

BOOK II.

The ecclesiastical question in the Convention parliament.

IT will now be proper to retrace our steps, and to see what was doing in parliament while the divines and the government were occupied in bringing matters to the issue stated in the last chapter. We learn from a private source, that on the 9th of July, 1660, the house of commons resolved itself into a committee on religion. This was somewhat more than two months after the meeting of parliament. The future of the established church was the question thus raised. But the notices which have reached us in regard to what was done are so fragmentary and obscure, as to give us but little definite information. It is clear, however, that a great difference of opinion was manifested. Sir Heneage Finch, the attorney-general, said the religion of the church of England was not a something to seek; and it was clear that his object was simply to restore the establishment of the past. But others were not exactly of his mind. The majority seemed desirous

that nothing should be hastily done, and that the first step should be to convene a synod of divines to deliberate on the question. Be it so, said Prynne; but let it be remembered that a synod can determine nothing; the ultimate authority on such questions rests with the king and parliament. Darkness came on that long summer day, and these earnest commoners were still in high debate. So intent were the Presbyterian members on giving utterance to their thoughts, that they called for lights. The Episcopalians, whose policy for the present was to keep such discussions in abeyance, resisted this innovation. Candles, however, were brought in. Twice they were extinguished. The third time, their dim light was effectually guarded. Great, we are told, was the disorder. At ten o'clock it was voted, 'That the king should be desired to convene a select number of divines, to treat concerning that affair, and the committee not to sit again until the 23rd of October next.'*

But the subject was not to be thus laid at rest. A week later, the Presbyterian members brought up the question anew. Nearly all who now spoke declared themselves favourable to an episcopacy, but were at the same time careful to state that it should be a moderate, and not the old, episcopacy. The Episcopalians pleaded that his majesty was in communication with divines of both persuasions, and that it was accordingly expedient, and only respectful to the king, to wait the result of those efforts. In the end, after a debate of seven hours, and again at ten o'clock at night, the old resolution, recommending the assembling of a synod, and a suspen-

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 79, 80.

BOOK II. sion of further discussion to the 23rd of October, was carried a second time.*

The Con-
vention par-
liament and
the King's
Declaration.

On the 25th of October, Charles issued his Declaration on ecclesiastical affairs. The proceedings which followed the reader has seen. The house of commons returned thanks to his majesty for this evidence of his care in behalf of the church. Many of the members would have proceeded at once to the introduction of a bill which should convert the royal Declaration into law. But it was urged by the Episcopalians, that as the document spoke of a synod of divines who were to consider the proposed changes, such a measure would be premature. A month later, however, the question was again raised; and a bill was brought into the lower house designed to embody his majesty's concession in a law. But again there was earnest debating. Some ventured to speak of the toleration ceded by the king as too great. Others were content to urge that the subject should be left to the new parliament, and to the houses of convocation which would be assembled with it. On the motion for a second reading of the bill being put, it was lost by a majority of 183 against 157. That decision brought the ecclesiastical labours of the convention parliament to a close. The royalists were persuaded, that in the new parliament, which was to be convened in the spring, their numbers would be much greater, and the case of the church would be completely in their hands. †

Parliament was dissolved on the 24th of December. The new parliament was not to assemble before the 8th of May. Events during this interval did not promise

* *Parl. Hist.* 82-85. *Ralph's History of England*, i. 15, 16.

† *Parl. Hist.* iv. 131-152. *Commons' Journals*, Nov. 28.

well for the future. The Christmas-keeping at the close of 1660, in many a noble mansion, and many an old hall, was no doubt such as few of the young in that generation had seen. But those national revelries were scarcely over, when news spread concerning an alarming outbreak in the capital. Armed men were said to have taken possession of St. Paul's, to have defeated the files of musketeers sent against them by the city authorities, and to have forced the city gates. All this was true, and rumour no doubt magnified this truth into wild and extravagant fictions.

During some years past, a man named Venner, a wine-cooper, had distinguished himself by his fanatical scheming and violence as a fifth-monarchy man—a sect consisting of persons who were intent on setting up a monarchy which should supersede every other, and of which Jesus Christ should be king. The mere mention of their object is enough to show them to have been madmen. Cromwell had sent Venner, and a number of his confederates, to prison, in 1657, as detected conspirators. The frenzy of the insurgents, in this instance, had been wrought to its highest at their place of meeting in Coleman-street, in the afternoon of the first Sunday in January. Having possessed themselves of St. Paul's, and scattered the trained bands, they paraded the streets, brandishing their swords, and uttering the most extraordinary exclamations. Towards evening they passed through Aldersgate into the country, and sought shelter in a wood near Highgate. But their commissariat failed them. By five o'clock on Wednesday morning they returned to the city. Here they encountered four city regiments and the king's life-guard, and, though not more than from thirty to forty men in number, the

Venner's
insurrection

BOOK II.

advantage during a full half hour was with the fanatics. At length, twenty were slain, Venner himself, having received three shot wounds, was taken prisoner, and six, who had taken possession of a house, and refused quarter, died in self-defence. Nine only remained, it seems, to be made prisoners.*

The use of
plots and
conspiracies

To the government this maniac proceeding was a godsend. It should be confessed, that the change at the Restoration was so great, and had taken place with so little resistance, that men who were merely looking on, might well suspect that the end would hardly be attained without some disturbance. Clarendon expected, and no doubt hoped, that something of that nature would happen. Men who meditate hard measures, are naturally desirous of such pretexts as may serve to give to them a semblance of necessity and justice.

But to the time of Venner's outbreak no tendency towards disorder had shown itself. The alleged conspiracy of some disbanded officers, reported by Clarendon to the convention parliament at its dissolution, would not have been left in obscurity had it been of a nature to bear the light.† The questions mooted ceaselessly, and in all places, were,—are the bishops to be restored in their old pomp and power or not? Is the Prayer Book to be

* Our fullest account of this outbreak is given by Echard. *Hist. Eng.*

† ‘ And this brings us back to the consideration of those plots which the chancellor had so eloquently enlarged upon at the close of the last parliament. Not only Rapin and Oldmixon, but Echard himself, treat all the stories of plots which were propagated at this time as no better than rumours. We have various accounts of the seizing of several obnoxious persons, but no one circumstance is mentioned to prove that they were guilty. Venner's madness, however, served to countenance all the fine things the chancellor had said, and all the violent things which had been done.’—*Ralph*, i. 34.

again imposed or not? Are the new powers about to forfeit the pledges on which they have been restored or not? The leaders among the more influential parties, the Presbyterians and the Independents, were too wise to meddle with such questions in the pulpit at such a juncture. But all parties have their indiscreet men. The worst, however, that could be said was, that the people would follow popular preachers, and meet in great crowds, in churches or conventicles, wherever the service was likely to be to their mind. Hence four days *before* Venner and his brotherhood perpetrated their outrage, the council-board at Whitehall issued the following proclamation:—‘Whereas divers factious persons, under ‘pretence of the liberty indulged by his majesty’s late ‘gracious Declaration, in reference to tender consciences, ‘do meet in great numbers and at unusual times, ‘whereby it *may be justly apprehended* that many of ‘them enter into plots and conspiracies to disturb the ‘peace of the kingdom: it is thereupon ordered by his ‘majesty in council, that Mr. Solicitor-General should ‘forthwith prepare a proclamation, commanding all ‘such persons going under the notion of Anabaptists, ‘Quakers, and other sectaries, henceforth not to meet— ‘under pretence of serving God—at unusual hours, nor ‘in great numbers; and particularly, that none of them ‘go out of the precincts of their own habitations to any ‘spiritual exercise, or serving of God after their own ‘way, but that they do the same *in their own parish*. ‘And if any shall be found to offend herein, the next ‘justices of the peace are to cause them to be proceeded ‘against according to the laws provided against riotous ‘and unlawful assemblies.’*

* Kennet’s Register, 352.

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It will be observed that this proclamation was issued, not because there *had been* 'plots and conspiracies,' but because such things 'may be justly *apprehended*.' To tell the sermon-hearing multitude of that great city, and in fact of all great cities, that they must be content with the spiritual provision which their own parish should afford them, whatever the qualities of that provision might be, would be to subject them to a restraint and bondage which they would denounce as insupportable. To violate such a law might be to incur the penalties 'provided against riotous and unlawful assemblies,' but violated the law nevertheless would be. That no pretext in support of such a measure might be derived from the conduct of Venner and his followers, all parties—Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Quakers—were forward in declaring, in the most formal and public manner, their abhorrence of that lawless and senseless proceeding.

The Non-conformists distrust the Government.

But this obnoxious proclamation, and the fact that a secretary of state, and the attorney-general, had been conspicuous in opposing the bill intended to pass the Royal Declaration into a law, led many Nonconformists to look with deep distrust on the policy of the court. It was deemed important, in consequence, to make it evident that the feeling opposed to the old polity and ritual of the established church was wide and deep. This posture of affairs disposed many Nonconformist ministers to abstain from the use even of those portions of the Book of Common Prayer which they could have used without scruple; and its influence became especially manifest as the time approached for electing members to the new parliament.

The candidates who aspired to represent the city were

nearly thirty. The court party, judging from the enthusiasm with which the citizens had received the king, were confident of success. But the feeling evinced by the dense crowd assembled in Guildhall on the 19th of March, soon undeceived them. Loud were the cries of approval or disapproval, of men and measures, which rose from all quarters. The bishops seemed to be especially out of favour with that boisterous multitude. For a while, the royalists stood their ground bravely, meeting the wit and invective directed against them with the same coin. But, ere long, it became evident enough, that the citizens were resolved on rejecting all the men named by the court; on rejecting the four whom they had themselves sent to the last parliament; and on being represented by men who could be pronounced good and true, both as Non-conformists and as the friends of popular liberty. The royalist leaders at length withdrew, heaping many an oath upon their opponents, but without even calling for a poll. The differences between Presbyterians and Independents, and between both and the sects below them, seemed to be forgotten on that day. The demonstration made was the result of their union.*

The defeated courtiers hastened to the chancellor and his friends with their bad tidings. But what had been

CHAP.
VIII.

—
The new
parliament
city elec-
tion.

Apprehen-
sion of the
government
—seizure of
letters.

* ‘The great talk of the town is the strange election that the city of London made yesterday for parliament-men, viz., Fowke, Love, Jones, and (Thompson); men who, so far from being episcopal, are thought to be Anabaptists, and chosen with a great deal of zeal, in spite of the other party who thought themselves so strong, calling out in the hall, “No bishops! No lord bishops!” It do make the people fear it may come to worse, by being an example to the country to do the same. And, indeed, the bishops are so high that very few do love them.’—Pepys’ *Diary*, i. 184.

BOOK II. done could not be undone. The next step was to restrict the mischief of such an example to the narrowest limits possible. The hall meeting had taken place at an early hour in the day. Before post time, the government had laid its hands on all letters directed for the provinces, examined them, and such as made any report concerning the election were detained. A large portion of those hastily-written epistles have been preserved, and are now made readily accessible to the student of history.* On the afternoon of that exciting day, not a few patriotic citizens sat down and wrote to their friends in the boroughs and cities of the kingdom, calling upon them to remember what London had done, and to do likewise. But the influence of their example, and of their patriotic exhortations, was not such as they had desired. For the present, counties and boroughs were for the greater part lost to the liberal cause. The royalists had never been so completely ascendant as on the meeting of this parliament, and their opponents were to be made sensible of their low estate. With the exception of about fifty members, who might sometimes express a doubt concerning the infallibility of the court, the new house of commons was to be, through this great crisis, at the ready disposal of the chancellor. The scene in the Guildhall on the 19th of March was remembered, but remembered only to be avenged.

Meeting of
the Pen-
sionary par-
liament.

One of the first acts of the commons, was to resolve that the house should take the sacrament in St. Margaret's according to the service of the church of England, and any member refusing compliance with this order was to forfeit his seat. One member, we are told, took the bread standing, and Mr. Prynne, refusing to

* Papers in the State Paper Office. *Domestic Series.*

kneel, was passed by. Many were questioned on account of their absence, and made excuses. In one instance the excuse was not admitted, and the delinquent was suspended.* Next, the two houses joined in dooming the League and Covenant to be burnt by the hangman in the most public places of London and Westminster. This measure passed the commons by a majority of 228 to 103. By the same functionary, in obedience to the same authority, a bonfire was kindled in the midst of Westminster Hall, while the courts were sitting, the fuel to the flame consisting of some of the most obnoxious acts passed by the late powers.

When this parliament assembled, the Savoy conference had been sitting six weeks, and was to continue its sitting some ten weeks longer. The purport of his majesty's Declaration, and the avowed object of the conference as founded upon it, might have been expected to suggest the propriety of postponing all action on ecclesiastical questions until the result of the pending deliberations should be known. But it was not more true, that the prelates had resolved, from the moment of their return to power, that the claims of the Nonconformists should not be ceded, than that this new parliament had determined, from the first day of its meeting, that no such compromise should be made, even though prince and prelate should combine to recommend it. It might have been supposed that nothing material could be done on any church matter until the conference should make its report to the convocation, and the two houses of convocation should make their report to the two houses of parliament. But so

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VIII.
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The parliament will not wait—the bishops are restored to their seats in parliament.

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 208. *Lathbury's Hist. Convocation.* Stoughton's *Church and State.*

BOOK II. impatient were the commons, that while the bishops were standing on the defensive at the Savoy, and Baxter and his friends were elaborating their case there, a bill was passed, and sent up to the lords, which restored the prelates to their seats in parliament, and to their ancient jurisdiction. The only resistance to this measure, it seems, came from the catholic party in the upper house.*

Parliament
and the
liturgy.

With this virtual restoration of the former government of the church, came a series of attempts towards a re-establishment of the old ritual.

Richard Baxter and his brethren were of course observant of these proceedings. On the 25th of June, a month before the close of the space allotted to the conference, the commons agreed to the following order : ‘ That a committee be appointed to view the several ‘ laws for confirming the liturgy of the church of Eng- ‘ land ; and to make search whether the original book of ‘ the liturgy, annexed to the act passed in the fifth and ‘ sixth years of the reign of king Edward the Sixth, be ‘ yet extant ; and to bring in a compendious bill to ‘ supply any defect in the former laws ; and *to provide ‘ for an effectual conformity to the liturgy of the church for ‘ the time to come.*’† The book desired, it seems, was some ‘ original’ and special copy of Edward’s second book of Common Prayer. Why the commons should have wished to see a volume which they were by no means prepared to adopt, is a question we cannot answer. A committee was now appointed, consisting of all the members of the long robe in the house, and the preparation of the proposed bill was ‘ specially recommended

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 215, Clarendon’s *Life*.

† *Commons’ Journals*, 279.

to the care of Mr. Sergeant Keeling,' a keen, active, and time-serving lawyer. Four days later, the bill was produced, was read the first time, and appointed to be read a second time on the following Wednesday. This was on the 29th of June; and on the 3rd of July the bill was placed in the hands of a committee, consisting of more than one hundred and fifty members, who are required to meet 'this afternoon, at four of the clock, in the Star Chamber. And if the original Book of Common Prayer cannot be found, then to report the said printed book, and their opinion touching the same; and to send for persons, papers, and records.* The next day, it was resolved that all the members of the house of both robes should be added to this committee. But now the adjournment was felt to be at hand. It was decided, however, that whatever might be dropped, the bill of uniformity should be proceeded with; and certain amendments being considered, on the 9th of July the bill was read a third time, under the title of—'An Act for the Uniformity of Public Prayers, and Administration of the Sacraments.' On the following day, the bill was presented to the upper house, by Sir Thomas Fanshawe and others, desiring 'their lordships' concurrence.' But the adjournment came, and their lordships did nothing on this grave subject before the following January.†

The proceedings of this brief session are important, inasmuch as they show that the severe measures of this parliament, which were carried out in August, 1662, were measures matured and settled in the summer of 1661. Nothing, accordingly, can be more unwarranted

Course
taken by
parliament
in 1661.

* The book sent up with the bill was that revised in 1604. Commons' Journals, 288, 289.

† *Ibid.* 291, 294-296.

BOOK II. than the pretence, that the episcopalian policy would have been more lenient if the Presbyterians had not come to be so unreasonable and so disaffected. The truth is, that party never became unreasonable, never became disaffected. Their error was on the side of a passive and confiding loyalty, and they would have been content with much less than the king himself had always taught them to expect.

Session of
1662.

On the 17th of January, 1662, the lords passed the bill 'for the Uniformity of Public Prayers' into the hands of a committee, consisting of eight bishops and eleven peers. On the 28th the commons sent a message to their lordships, urging dispatch in this matter. On the 13th of February, the earl of Dorset reported to the house, 'That the committee had met often, and expected a book of uniformity to be brought in; but that not being done, their lordships had made no progress, and the committee therefore desired to know the pleasure of the house, whether they should proceed upon the book brought from the house of commons, or stay until the other book be brought in.*' The bishop of London signified to the house that the 'other book,' meaning the Book of Common Prayer as revised by convocation, should soon be presented.

Message
from the
King.

Twelve days later the chancellor informed the house that he had been commanded by the king to deliver a message to their lordships. In a letter then read, his majesty reminded the house of the Declaration which he had issued in October, 1660, and of what had been done since to bring the Book of Common Prayer into the state in which it had been presented to him by the houses of convocation, and concluded by saying, 'All

* Lords' Journals, 364, 366, 372, 383.

‘ which his majesty, having duly considered, doth, with
‘ the advice of his council, fully approve and allow the
‘ same ; and doth recommend it to the house of peers,
‘ that the said books of Common Prayer, and of the forms
‘ of Ordination and Consecration of bishops, priests, and
‘ deacons, with those alterations and additions, be the
‘ book which, in and by the intended act of Uniformity,
‘ shall be appointed to be used’ in all cathedrals, colleges,
and churches, under such penalties as the parliament
should deem expedient.*

CHAP.
VIII
—

Whatever ideas of comprehension Charles may once have entertained, he now seems to have surrendered himself to the stream, and to have begun to imagine that the more rigid the established church should become, the greater would be the necessity of a toleration for those beyond its pale, and that a toleration of Protestants might, as a matter of equity, be made to embrace a relaxation of the laws against Catholics. On the 1st of March his majesty summoned the house of commons to meet him in the banqueting house in Whitehall, and, to give them satisfaction concerning his ecclesiastical policy, he addressed them in the following terms :—‘ Gentlemen, I hear you are very zealous for
‘ the church, and very solicitous, and even jealous that
‘ there is not expedition enough made in that affair. I
‘ thank you for it, since I presume it proceeds from a
‘ good root of piety and devotion ; but I must tell
‘ you I have the worst luck in the world, if, after all the
‘ reproaches of being a Papist while I was abroad, I am
‘ suspected of being a Presbyterian now I am come
‘ home. I know you will not take it unkindly if I tell
‘ you, that I am as zealous for the church of England as

The King’s
new policy.

* Lords’ Journals, 392, 393.

BOOK II. 'any of you can be; and am enough acquainted with
 'the enemies of it on all sides; that I am as much in
 'love with the Book of Common Prayer as you can
 'wish, and have prejudice enough against those who do
 'not love it; who, I hope, in time, will be better in-
 'formed, and change their minds; and you may be
 'confident I do as much desire to see a uniformity
 'settled as any amongst you; I pray you trust me in
 'that affair. I promise you to hasten the despatch of
 'it.' In pursuance of this policy, his majesty had
 transmitted the Book of Common Prayer as revised by
 convocation to the house of lords, expressing his full
 approbation of it, and his wish that the intended Act of
 Uniformity might be founded upon it.

The Bill
 made more
 oppressive
 by the
 Lords.

During several sittings the house was engaged in
 reading and considering the revised portions of this
 volume. On the motion, 'Whether this book that has
 'been transmitted to this house from the king, shall be
 'the book to which the Act of Uniformity shall relate,'
 the affirmative was pronounced without a division. In the
 same manner the bill itself was passed, and a conference
 was at once sought with the commons.*

The conference took place with all the usual for-
 malities. When the commons also had read and con-
 sidered the revisions made in liturgy and ordinal by
 convocation, the question was put—Shall these revisions
 be discussed, and was lost by a majority of 96 to 90.
 A resolution, however, was passed unanimously, which
 said, that those revisions 'might' have been discussed,
 had the house been so disposed. So the right of the
 state to supervise and limit the action of the church was
 to be guarded.

* Commons' Journals, 377.

The amendments by the lords, on the Act of Uniformity as sent up by the commons, were considerable. From the form of the references to them in the journals, it is not easy in all cases to ascertain what were the exact points of difference ; but it is evident the changes were mostly of a kind to make the act still more oppressive. Episcopal ordination was made to be imperative. The form of subscription to the Book of Common Prayer was no longer a consent merely *to use* it, but an assent *to all that it contained*. The non-resistance and covenant clauses, which had been introduced into the Corporation Act, were inserted ; and the change of St. Bartholomew's day for Michaelmas day was a fraudulent and cruel innovation, inasmuch as it would rob the ejected who had done the service of their cures through the current year, of the income for that year. The commons adopted all these amendments, and coupled them with some other provisions not less exceptionable. How the measure as thus materially changed by the upper house was regarded by the lower, we learn in part from the speech of Mr. Sergeant Charleton, who managed the last conference of the commons with the lords on this question.* The orator not only mentions some points in which the commons did not concur with their lordships, but states the reasons on which their difference of judgment was founded.

The commons claimed that all tutors and schoolmasters should be required to subscribe to the passive obedience clause, and to the clause declaring the nullity of the League and Covenant. The reasons assigned in support of this provision were, that much of the disaffection in the Long Parliament had come from the want

The rigour
of the Lords
exceeded by
the Com-
mons.

* Lords' Journals, 446-450.

BOOK II. of such precaution ; and that much of the loyalty found in the youth of the best families since his majesty's return might be traced to the oversight of the late powers, 'who took no care in this particular.' Offenders in this form, if possessed of livings, might be deprived of them ; and the commons insisted that such as had no livings to lose, should be subject to not less than three months' imprisonment, without bail or mainprize. In the case of a second offence, fine was added to imprisonment. The lords, in conformity with a suggestion from the king, would have left his majesty a power to dispense with strict conformity in some cases, especially as to the use of the cross and surplice. But the commons were resolute in resisting the proposal. It was alleged, by Mr. Sergeant Charleton, that to enact a law, and to cede a liberty to suspend it, would be an inconsistency unknown to ecclesiastical legislation. 'The gentleman ' added, that he thought it better to impose no ceremonies, than to dispense with any ; and he thought it ' very incongruous, at the same time when you are ' settling uniformity, to establish schism.' Nor would it, he maintained, satisfy the malcontents, inasmuch as their objection was to any law which made things in their own nature indifferent to be necessary, and so the many things thus established would all remain to be a ground of quarrel. These were the objections, he said, arising from the nature of the thing ; and as to the reasons given by their lordships to the commons, the answer was, that his majesty, in his engagement at Breda, concerning tender consciences, must be understood as having had respect, not to the misleaders of the people, but to the misled. 'It would be very strange to call a ' schismatical conscience a tender conscience. He said

‘ a tender conscience denoted an impression from without, ‘ received from another.’ But supposing the case to be as their lordships seemed to have put it, ‘ There could ‘ be no inference of any breach of promise in his ‘ majesty, because that “ Declaration ” had these two ‘ limitations—a reference to parliament, and to liberties ‘ that might be granted consistently with the peace of ‘ the kingdom.’ The speaker knew full well, that the Nonconformists of 1660 had a right to interpret the language of their sovereign after another manner. But this sort of reasoning sufficed for its purpose. It only remained to take care, that the ejected ministers should not only lose their last year’s income, but that they should be deprived of all assistance from their former cures. The lords, after the example of the Long Parliament, would have assigned a fifth of the revenue of the ejected incumbents towards the support of the sufferers and their families. But the spirit of revenge had taken possession of the commons. Charleton, expressing their feeling, said nothing could be more inconsistent than to enact uniformity, and at the same time to assign bounty to men refusing to conform. Such an allowance, and ‘ the pity of their party,’ would make their new circumstances preferable to the old. They had caused suffering to others, let them suffer in return.

The lords saw their evil counsel adopted, and their better counsel rejected, and they assented to what was done. So his majesty, on the day appointed for the prorogation, gave his royal assent to this memorable bill, along with many others which were not memorable. Judging from the speech of the king on that occasion, the ecclesiastical proceedings of the session included nothing to call for allusion. The speaker, indeed, con-

CHAP.
VIII.

The Bill
is passed.

BOOK II. gratulated the sovereign on his having seen the disputing age, in which every unclean beast defiled the temple, pass away ; on his having restored the government and patrimony of the church ; and on his being about to pass an act for order and uniformity in worship, to which he hoped the God of order would dispose the nation to conform itself. Clarendon, as usual, cited learned authors, and indulged in old similitudes, and could not but hope, that the return of the bishops, with their wonted hospitality, to their several homes in the provinces, would tend to neutralize the teaching of men who were more disposed to respect their old errors than to repent of their evil deeds, and to dispose the laity who had strayed ‘to return to the bosom of their dear mother the church.’ Of all people, according to his lordship, the English people would be the most insensible to benefits, if blessings of all kinds, in such extraordinary multitude, should fail to produce ‘a universal contentedness and ‘satisfaction, visible in the looks, and thoughts, and ‘words, and action of the whole nation.’ His majesty sat enthroned and robed in the upper house as these words were uttered. The bishops were present in their lawn ; the peers in suits of their ancient bravery ; and the commons stood uncovered below the bar, as the sovereign received, in its turn, the great Act of Uniformity, and by pronouncing the words, ‘*Le Roy le veult,*’ gave origin to a future in English history, in the midst of which we are at this day, and the fruit of which is still largely to come.



CHAPTER IX.

The Independents in relation to the Act of Uniformity.

THE attempts towards a compromise related in the preceding chapters were made by the Presbyterians. In those proceedings, extending as they do over nearly two years, there is scarcely an allusion to the Independents, or to the other sects. What was the position of the Congregationalists at this juncture? What were their expectations?

CHAP. IX.

The reader has seen the grounds of difference between the Presbyterians and the Independents, and how the latter rose to power in place of the former. It will be remembered that the Independents in the Assembly of Divines were not the advocates of an unrestricted religious liberty. This party, the moderate Independents as they may be called, continued to the time of the Restoration, and continued to be strong. Its representatives in the assembly were its representatives still, and with those persons we must class such men as Owen, and Gale, and Howe. In the judgment of this party, it became the magistrates, not only to protect the peaceable in their religious exercises, but, within certain

The State-
church In-
dependents.

BOOK II. limits, to encourage and diffuse the profession of the Protestant religion, as it was then generally recognised and defined. A state church should be broad and liberal, but the idea of such a church was by no means repugnant to their thoughts. The authority of the magistrate was not to be pleaded against the authority of Christ—in other words, the conscience of the state was not to give law to the conscience of the individual. But there was much, it was concluded, which the magistrate might do, without violating that great principle; and what might be thus done, they were willing to see done.

One of these men, reasoning with his Presbyterian brethren, says, ‘It is a great question among our brethren, ‘whether this *traditio Satano* was not peculiar to the ‘apostles. And if it prove so, then non-communication ‘will prove to be the utmost censure the church now ‘hath. What if they will not regard your delivering them up to Satan? You say you will then complain to the magistrate. This power must come in to ‘make them regard what the church doth. As for subjection to the magistrate, there we are upon equal ‘ground. If he will interpose, he may second the sentence of judging men subverters of the faith, if withdrawing communion from them, and we must still be ‘subject here to suffer what is inflicted, if we cannot do ‘what is required. Only we do not go so far as some ‘do in this thing; whereas they lay a law upon the conscience of magistrates, that they are bound to assist the ‘decrees of the church, taking cognizance only of the ‘fact, that the church hath decreed, not inquiring into ‘the nature of the things; we dare not lay any such ‘bond on the conscience of the magistrate, but say that ‘he is to assist the church, both in the knowledge of

‘ what the church has done, and the knowledge of the
‘ nature of the thing. Seeing every private man hath
‘ power to be judge of his own act, it were a great misery
‘ upon those who have power over them to be denied
‘ this power.’ *

Dr. Owen, immediately after the death of Charles I.,
taught that the magistrate should take care that the
people have places of worship, and a faithful ministry : †
Greenhill, another Independent, delivered his judgment
on this topic, about the same time, in the following
terms : ‘ It is one thing to restrain men’s practices which
‘ are idolatrous, blasphemous, against pure worship, the
‘ power of godliness, and the peace of the state—another
‘ to force men to that which their judgment and con-
‘ science are against. I pleaded not even for a tole-
‘ ration of all, but only that those whose lives are holy,
‘ peaceable, and differ in judgment from others in some
‘ things, may not be forced to conform or depart.’ ‡

In 1657, the parliament then sitting presented its
‘ Humble Petition and Advice’ to the Protector, in which
they urged that a confession of faith should be agreed
upon by his highness and the parliament, to be published
as the faith ‘ of these nations.’ This faith was to be
substantially the faith known as that of the reformed
churches ; and the men holding it, though differing from
each other ‘ in matters of worship and discipline,’ were
to be deemed alike eligible to any office in the state,
either civil or ecclesiastical. Popery and prelacy were
excepted from this scheme—on grounds both political
and ecclesiastical in both cases. But this project was
frustrated by the dissolution of the parliament. As a

Toleration
according to
the Humble
Petition and
Advice.

* *Irenicum*. By Jeremiah Burroughs, 47.

† *Works*, xv. 20.

‡ Greenhill’s *Ezekiel*. Preface.

BOOK II. scheme of religious liberty it would have been imperfect ; but it was large and generous compared with anything of that nature which had hitherto come from a parliament.

Meeting of
the Inde-
pendents in
the Savoy,
1658.

In the following year, Mr. Griffith, preacher at the Charter House, was instructed by the government to convene an assembly of representatives from the Congregational churches of England. The intention in this proceeding was, that a declaration of the faith and order of the Independent churches might be drawn up and made public. The delegates met on the 29th of September. But the Protector had died on the third of that month. What this assembly might have been if the Protector had lived we can only conjecture. Many seem to have concluded that in his absence little could be done, and there were cautious men among the Congregationalists who had learnt to distrust all such centralized forms of power. The two hundred delegates who assembled, gave a fair expression to the opinion and feeling of the Independents, but in respect to numbers they were by no means an adequate representation.

The meet-
ing approves
the present
settlement.

Dr. Owen, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Nye, Bridge, Caryl, and Greenhill, and Tomes, Jessey, and Dyke, who were Baptists, were the committee appointed to prepare the intended Declaration. On the theological articles it will be enough to say that they were such as would be accounted in that age moderately Calvinistic. The portions of the paper chiefly interesting to us are those which relate to the supposed duty of the magistrate towards religion. The delegates are manifestly agreed in recognising what they call 'the present settlement,' as an adjustment of the relations between religion and the state to which no scriptural or reasonable exception could be taken. This settlement, it will be remembered, gave

the revenue of the parishes of England to the incumbents, according to ancient law. It also respected the rights of patrons; but it reserved some right to the people, left church discipline simply 'persuasive,' and while insisting on substantial orthodoxy, tolerated much diversity in forms of worship, and in church proceedings generally.

Concerning the magistrate, the representatives of the Congregational churches in England in 1658 speak of him as 'bound to encourage, promote, and protect the professors and profession of the Gospel, and to manage and order civil administrations in a due subserviency to the interest of Christ in the world; and to that end, to take care that men of corrupt minds and conversations do not licentiously publish and divulge blasphemy and errors in their own nature subverting the faith, and inevitably destroying the souls of them that receive them.*' On presenting this Declaration, not to Oliver, but to his son Richard, Dr. Thomas Goodwin says, on behalf of his brethren, 'And now we present to your highness what we have done, and commit to your trust the common faith once delivered to the saints. The Gospel, and the saving truths of it, being a national endowment bequeathed by Christ himself at his ascension, and committed to the trust of some in the nation's behalf; "committed to my trust," saith Paul, "in the name of the ministers;" and we look at the magistrates as *custos utriusque tabulae* (keepers of both tables), and so commit to your trust, as our chief magistrate, to countenance and propagate.†

On the
magistrate
and religion

These passages, with others to the same purport, and of an earlier date, will suffice to indicate that there

* Hanbury, iii. 542.

† Orme's *Life of Owen*.

BOOK II.

were causes in operation in those times to prevent the full development of the principles of religious liberty, even among the leaders of the Independents. The church, in seeking freedom from the power of the state, was seeking emancipation from a jealous master. For a time, it was not unnatural that what could be left to the authority of the magistrate, consistently with guarding the liberty of the individual conscience, should be openly ceded. Great had been the care of our separatists, from the time of Elizabeth downwards, to assure the sovereign that church freedom might be made compatible with everything legitimate in state power. It should be remembered, too, that our parochial system had been rooted in the land by the strength of law and usage during nearly a thousand years. The wrench which had come upon the old order of things already was great. It would have been extraordinary if a few years had sufficed to extend it much further. The Congregational ministers invited by Cromwell to the Savoy meeting in 1658, were all, so far, state churchmen. They came together from the parish pulpits, or from the colleges of the land, at his call. They had learnt much, but their antecedents and circumstances forbid our expecting them to have learnt everything.

Liberality of
the Congre-
gationalist
Confession.

The language in which these moderate men express themselves concerning the forbearance and charity which Christians should exercise one towards another, in respect to a large field of difference, both in opinion and usage, will be felt to be new, free, and beautiful, if compared with the language of prelates and courtiers on the same matters from the accession of Elizabeth to the death of Laud. The Independents under Cromwell speak as follows on this subject, in the preface to the

‘Savoy Confession.’ The world, they say, has scarcely known an opinion which has not come up anew in England during the last twenty years; but ‘we have all along this season held forth, though quarrelled with for it by our brethren, this great principle of these times, —that amongst all Christian states and churches there ought to be a forbearance and mutual indulgence unto saints of all persuasions, in all extra-fundamental matters, whether of faith or order, so they hold fast the necessary foundations of faith and holiness. That this has been our constant principle we are not ashamed to confess to the whole world. Wherein we desire to be understood, not as if indifferent to falsehood or truth, so we had our liberty in our petty and smaller differences. No, we profess, that the whole and every particle of that “faith delivered unto the saints,” the substance of which we have here professed, is as precious to us as our lives. But yet withal, we contend for this,—that, in the concrete, the persons of all such gracious saints, they and their errors as they are in them, when they are such errors as may stand with communion with Christ, though they should not repent of them to the end of their days, as not being convinced of them, that those, with their errors, being purely spiritual, and such as do not entrench and overthrow civil societies, should, for Christ’s sake, be borne with by all Christians, and be permitted to enjoy all ordinances and spiritual privileges as freely as any other of their brethren, who pretend to the greatest orthodoxy.’

Our differences about church government, say the delegates, have led some men to conclude that there is no prescribed polity in the New Testament, and that the

Erastianism
should be
tolerant.

BOOK II.

clause in that matter is left to the magistrate. But it would be only consistent in such a magistrate to be tolerant. ‘And thereupon, exercising a forbearance and encouragement to the people of God, differing from him and from themselves, he doth therein discharge as great a faithfulness to Christ and love to his people as can any way be supposed and expected from any Christian magistrate of what persuasion soever he may be. And where this clemency from governors is shown to any sort of persons or churches, on such a principle, it will in equity produce this effect, that all that so differ from him and amongst themselves, standing in equal difference from the principle of such a magistrate, he is equally free to give a like liberty to them. This faithfulness in our governors, which appeared much in our late reformation, we do with thankfulness to God acknowledge, and to their everlasting honour. The Hierarchy, Common Prayer Book, and all other grievous things to God’s people being removed, they made choice of an assembly of learned men, to advise what government and order would be meet to be established in the room of these things. And because it was known there were different opinions, as always hath been among godly men, about forms of church government, there was by Ordinance, not only a choice made of persons of several persuasions to sit as members there, but liberty given to a lesser number of Dissenting members to report their judgments and reasons as well, and as freely, as the major part. Hereupon, the honourable house of commons—an indulgence never to be forgotten—finding, by papers received from them, that the members of the assembly were not likely to compose differences amongst them-

‘ selves so as to join in the same rule for church govern-
‘ ment, did order further, as followeth:—“That a
‘ committee of lords and commons do take into con-
‘ sideration the differences of opinions in the assembly
‘ of divines on the point of church government,
‘ and to endeavour a union if it be possible; and,
‘ in case that cannot be done, to endeavour the find-
‘ ing out of some way how far tender consciences,
‘ which cannot in all things submit to the same
‘ rule which shall be established, shall be borne with
‘ according to the Word, and as may stand with the
‘ public peace.” By all which it is evident, the parlia-
‘ ment purposed not to establish the rule of church
‘ government with such rigour as might not bear with
‘ a practice different from what they had established, in
‘ persons and churches of different principles, if occasion
‘ were. And this Christian clemency and indulgence in
‘ our governors hath been the foundation of the freedom
‘ in the managing of church affairs which our brethren,
‘ as well as we that differ from them, do now and have
‘ many years enjoyed.’

Such was the course approved and acted upon by the Independents when in power. Their faith was an earnest faith; but they ceded a large liberty in things indifferent, and evinced a charity designed to embrace all good men. The maxims of ecclesiastical policy under Laud and Sheldon were not exactly of this description. But the position of the pious men who made these liberal professions, and who braved much as the consequence of making them, was not the high position to which their distinctive principles as Independents should have led them. Milton, in his riper judgment as a Congregationalist, came to see this, and poured forth his lofty

Milton and
the Inde-
pendents.

BOOK. II. eloquence against it. He complains heavily that those who had preached out prelates and casuists should be found clinging to the old 'legal and popish arguments for tithes;' and especially, 'that Independents should 'take that name, as they may justly, from the true freedom of Christian doctrine and church discipline, subject to no superior judge but God only, and still seek to be *dependents* on the magistrate for maintenance, which two things, *independence* and *state hire* in religion, *can never consist long or certainly together*. For magistrates, at one time or other, not like those at present, the patrons of our Christian liberty, will pay none but such as, by their committees of examination, they find conformable to their interest and opinions. And hirelings will soon frame themselves to that interest and those opinions which they see best pleasing to their paymasters, and to seem right themselves will force others as to the truth.'*

The consistent Independents.

Less gifted men in our history than John Milton had made their way to this conclusion long before, some by the aid of learning and much thought, others by some of the simplest processes of the understanding and the heart. Harmony between independent churches and state enactments on the subject of religion, must always be the result of accident. There are no principles existing to ensure that it shall be other than an exception; it cannot be the rule. The opinions concerning the province of the magistrate in regard to religion which Baxter found to be so common in the army, and which he knew to be embraced by Cromwell, and by the men most in his confidence, were the consistent development

* *Hirelings out of the Church*, 385.

of the principle of Independency.* In 1664, while the Congregationalists in the Assembly of Divines were constrained to impose some limit on their doctrine of toleration, their brethren out of doors carried their great maxim to its legitimate issues. ‘By the command of ‘God,’ they said, ‘the magistrate is discharged to put ‘the least discourtesy on any man, Turk, Jew, Papist, or ‘Socinian, or of any religion whatever, for his religious ‘belief.’ We learn from Baillie, that one of the men who so spoke was Mr. John Goodwin, the minister of Coleman-street; and the same writer assures us, that at that time ‘this way was very pleasant to many.’† Roger Williams, then an Independent; and Sir Harry Vane, then passing from his New England speculations to his more consistent and matured views; and the honest and brave Henry Burton, were among the leaders on the side of this more advanced opinion. By this time the Independents had set up ‘a number of private congregations in the city.’‡ One intelligent convert to Congregationalism takes upon him to answer the question, What will satisfy the Independents? ‘To be ‘accountable to the magistrate,’ is his reply, ‘for what ‘they may do amiss, but otherwise to be as free to ‘choose their own company, place, and time, with ‘whom, where, and when to worship God, as they are ‘to choose their wives—for a forced marriage will not ‘hold. This, I say, will satisfy all that go under the ‘name of Independents.’ §

* ‘One among a thousand proofs of Cromwell’s attachment to the ‘best interests of human nature.’ Coleridge’s *Notes on English Divines*, ii. 13.

† Letters, May 10, 1644.

‡ *Ibid.* Let. 63.

§ *What the Independents would Have.* By John Cook, of Gray’s Inn, Barrister. 1647.

BOOK II.

Milton on
Civil power
in Ecclesiastical
causes.

Milton knew that such ideas had been widely vitalized among the Independents when he gave his treatise on 'Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes' to the world, and brought his argument to a close with the following weighty words—'As to those magistrates who think it their work to settle religion, and those ministers or others who often call upon them to do so, I trust that, having well considered what has been here argued, neither *they* will continue in that intention, nor *these* in that expectation from them; when they shall see that the settlement of religion belongs only to each particular church, by persuasive and spiritual means within itself, and that the *defence* only of the church belongs to the magistrate. Had he once learned not farther to concern himself with church affairs, half his labour might be spared, and the commonwealth better tended. To which end, that which I premised in the beginning, and in due place treated of more at large, I desire now, concluding, that they would consider seriously what religion is, and they will find it to be in sum, both our belief and our practice, depending on God only. That there can be no place then left for the magistrate, or his force in the settlement of religion, by appointing what we shall believe in divine things, or practise in religious, I persuade me in the Christian ingenuity of all religious men, the more they examine seriously, the more they will find clearly to be true; and find how false and deceivable that common saying is, which is so much relied upon, that the Christian magistrate is *custos utriusque tabulæ*, keeper of both tables, unless is meant by keeper the defender only.'

Retrospect.

This brief retrospect may enable the reader to apprehend the exact position of the Independents in 1662.

Many of them had taken religion wholly out of the hands of the magistrate; and the least advanced among them had reduced the action of the state in such matters to very narrow limits. Some of them may have so far believed in the promises of the king and of his friends as to have thought it possible that the new settlement would be so liberally devised as to include them. But the number of such persons must have been small. All that was expected or desired by most was a simple liberty of worship, and those who might have been pleased with some scheme of comprehension so large as to have embraced them, saw so little probability of any such adjustment that they made no effort in that direction.*

Baxter, indeed, tells us, that 'the chief of the Congregational party took it ill' that the Presbyterians had not taken them with them into the conference with the bishops in 1660.† And this feeling on the part of the Independents was not unreasonable. They had made concessions to the Presbyterians, in the hope of conciliating them, which the leaders of that party would never have thought of making for the same purpose, had the power of the state passed into their hands. But they found that the liberal maxims which characterized

CHAP. IX

Independents and Presbyterians.

* Dr. Owen, writing in 1681, professes his willingness to cede a large power to the magistrate in regard to religion, but limits that power by the following material provisions:—'1. That no supreme magistrate hath power to deprive or abridge the churches of Christ of any right, authority, or liberty granted unto them by Jesus Christ; 2. Nor hath any to coerse, punish, or kill any persons—being civilly peaceable and morally honest—because they are otherwise minded in things concerning Gospel faith and worship than he is.' *Enquiry into the Nature of Evangelical Churches*. The cases are few in which magistracy would care to accept of any church relationship on such terms.

† *Life*, 379.

BOOK II. their policy had become the occasion of a deadly schism between them and their Presbyterian brethren; and to speak the plain truth, so far as some men of that party were concerned, the Restoration looked too much like an intentional abandonment of the Independents to the tender mercies of the royalists. In all their negotiations, whether with the king, the bishops, or the government, not an effort was made, not a word was spoken, in relation to any interest beyond their own. We would gladly attribute this reticence to some creditable motive. Some may have honestly supposed that to attempt to take the Independents along with them would have been simply to damage their own cause. But we have reason to know that the policy of some leading men was not such as to raise them in our estimation. In August, 1660, Mr. Edmund Calamy, Mr. Simeon Ash, and Mr. Manton addressed a letter to a body of Scottish clergy in Edinburgh, in which they say, ‘ We do with you heartily
 ‘ rejoice in the return of our sovereign to the exercise of
 ‘ his government over these his kingdoms, and as we
 ‘ cannot but own much of God in the way of bringing it
 ‘ about, so we look upon the thing itself as the fruit of
 ‘ prayers, and a mercy not to be forgotten. Hitherto
 ‘ our God hath helped us in *breaking the formidable*
 ‘ *power of séctaries*, causing them to fall by the violence
 ‘ of their own attempts, and in restoring us to our
 ‘ ancient government after so many shakings—the only
 ‘ proper basis to support the happiness and just liberties
 ‘ of these nations—and freeing us from the many snares
 ‘ and dangers to which we were exposed by the former
 ‘ confusions and usurpations.’ But the ‘ formidable
 power of sectaries’ being thus brought to an end—what next? ‘ We have to do,’ say these sorry politicians,

‘with men of different humours and principles. The
‘general stream and current is for the old prelacy in all
‘its pomp and height, and therefore it cannot be hoped
‘that the Presbyterial government should be owned as
‘the public establishment of this nation, while the tide
‘runneth so strongly that way; and the bare toleration
‘of it will certainly produce a mischief, whilst Papists and
‘sectaries of all sorts will wind themselves in under the
‘covert of such a favour. Therefore no course seemeth
‘likely to secure religion and the interest of Christ Jesus
‘our Lord but by making presbytery a part of the
‘public establishment.’* In other words, the aim of
Calamy and his friends was to secure an establishment
broad enough to include themselves, and no more.
With regard to toleration, inasmuch as to tolerate any-
thing beyond the pale of the established church would
be made a plea for tolerating everything, toleration in
any form could not be desirable—it would ‘produce a
mischief.’ This is not a pleasant disclosure. It reveals
the weak point in the Presbyterian sufferers of 1662—
so little had these pious men learned in the school where
the least teachable generally learn something. We can
suppose that many in that party were more justly and
generously disposed, but such was the feeling of the
persons named, and such was the course taken by them.†

* Woodrow’s *Introduction*, App. No. 10. Kennet’s *Register*, 227, 228.

† It is due to Baxter to say that, certainly, it would not have been in accordance with his principles to deny toleration to any sect, with the exception of Papists and Socinians, so long as their conduct should be consistent with morality and civil order. He, no doubt, spoke the language of the better men of his sect when he laid down the following principles:—‘1. That all Christian princes and governors take all the ‘coercive power about religion into their own hands, and that they

BOOK II. To turn from the language of such persons to that of Milton, and of the Independents generally, is to turn as from the utterance of children to those of full-grown men. There was nothing, indeed, in this conduct on the part of the Presbyterians to justify the course taken towards them by the parliament and the government in 1662. But there was enough in it to have justified a stern indignation on the part of the Independents and the other 'sectaries,' whose fallen state it had been, it seems, so pleasant a matter to bring about.

Independents and Baptists pleaded with the government for toleration, and the reader has seen the perplexity and dismay which were scattered among the commissioners at the Savoy, when the question as to what should be done with this suit was broached by the chancellor, in presence of the king. The bishops were silent—prudently silent. The Presbyterians, too, held their peace. One of them, it will be remembered, a

'make a difference between the *approved* and the *tolerated* churches; and that they keep the peace between these churches, and settle their several privileges by a law. 2. That the churches be accounted *tolerable* which profess all that is in the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue, &c. &c. 3. And that those that are further orthodox in those particulars which rulers think fit to impose upon their subjects, have their public maintenance and greater encouragement.' *Life*, 132. But in 1662, even Baxter contented himself with making suit that his own sect should be *approved*; the *tolerated*, if there was to be such, were left to plead their own cause.

The following, however, is Baxter's account of the impression made on the mind of the Independents and others when the report of the manner in which the Presbyterians had acquitted themselves in the Savoy conference was published:—'The Independents confessed that we had dealt faithfully and satisfactorily: and indifferent men said that reason had overwhelmed the cause of the Diocesans, and that we had offered them so much as left them without excuse. And the moderate Episcopal men said the same.' *Ibid.* 380.

man who knew the weak side of their good brother, Richard Baxter, ventured to whisper in his ear—don't speak. And the pause was long. But the pastor of Kidderminster, as was his wont, presently found a reason for doing as he was inclined to do. Silence, he said, will be construed as consent, and to consent to a toleration at all must be to consent to a toleration of Papists, and that must not be. So Baxter spoke on this delicate question, and spoke too much after the manner of his brethren, Calamy, Ash, and Manton. The king saw that the Presbyterians would never plead for toleration, if the basis of conformity should be made wide enough to include themselves, and his majesty appears to have become willing to see them shut up to nonconformity, that, deprived of liberty themselves, they might be constrained to plead for it on behalf of others. Had they cast in their lot with Independents, Baptists, and Quakers, taking exception to Romanism on its own special grounds, the result of their conferences might have been different. But they chose to stand alone, and standing alone, were the more easily conquered.

The part which the English Congregationalists were said to have taken in bringing the late king to the scaffold could not fail to operate much against them at the Restoration. 'The Independents, as they are called,' says Milton, 'were the only men who from first to last kept to their point, and knew what use to make of their victory. They refused, and wisely in my opinion, to make him king again, being then an enemy, who, when he was their king, had made himself their enemy; nor were they ever less averse from a peace, but they very prudently dreaded a new war, or a perpetual slavery under the name of peace.' Such

The Independents especially exposed to resentment at the Restoration.

BOOK II.

was, no doubt, the general impression concerning this party on the return of the king. All that can be said, however, concerning the real authors of the proceedings against Charles I. is, that there were Independents among them. There were Congregationalists who protested against what was done, and there were men who were not of that sect who assented to the deed, and hastened its consummation. Charles had outlived his popularity. His best friends had become weary of his endless duplicities. Every man who had been committed against him felt that to trust him would be suicide. Had he been left to die in prison he would have died almost unlamented. The death allotted to him made him a martyr, and gave a power to his name which nothing else could have given.

Congregationalists
among the
ejected.

But the belief was general that the blood of the late king rested mainly on the Independents. Cromwell was regarded as an embodiment of the principle and feeling of that sect, and Cromwell had killed the king. From this popular impression the Congregationalists could not augur favourably in regard to their future. A vague idea also in respect to the numbers of this sect appears to have added to the distrust and suspicion with which it was regarded. During the last ten years the influence of the Independents had been great in relation to all the departments of government, and it was only natural that there should be a great increase of ministers more or less of that persuasion in the parishes of England. The fact that many Congregational ministers declined the honour of officiating in the parish churches, and chose rather to form churches for themselves, made the question of numbers one of still greater difficulty.*

* 'The Christian church is universal; not tied to nation, diocese,

Of the twenty-five Congregational ministers in London who signed the protest against Venner's insurrection, thirteen only were incumbents, the remaining twelve, or most of them, were pastors of 'gathered' or voluntary churches beyond the pale of the establishment. Dissent, in this form, existed more or less throughout the country, especially in the large towns. From Evelyn's diary and letters, and from other sources, it appears that to go to a parish church under the Commonwealth, was, in the common language, to go to hear an Independent, not, as formerly, a Presbyterian. The Presbyterians, either strongly Scotch, or moderately English, were still the majority; but this change in the language of the time had come from the prominence acquired by the Independents after the death of the king. In the state paper office there is a report made to the government by a spy in 1661, giving the names of Congregational ministers who 'preach publicly in and about London.' The names are thirty-six in number, including the leading Independents, such as Greenhill, Nye, and John Goodwin, with some Baptists. Some officiated in the parish churches, but the majority appear to have had their own places of meeting; and the edifices in Petty France, by St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, and at the Old Artillery, are described as 'large assembling places built of late.' The Calamys were men with strong preferences as Presbyterians. The case of the Independents is not to be

'or parish, but consisting of many particular churches complete in themselves, gathered not of compulsion, or the accident of dwelling nigh together, but by free consent choosing both their particular church and their church officers; whereas if tythes be set up, all their Christian privileges will be disturbed and soon lost, and with them Christian liberty.' Milton's *Hirelings*, 1659.

BOOK II.

adequately learnt from the 'Account of the Ejected.' Many who should have been described as Congregationalists, or as 'of the Congregational way,' are not so reported. Among the ejected ministers in London, somewhat more than a third are known Presbyterians, a little less than a third are Congregationalists, and the remainder may probably be divided in nearly equal proportions between the two parties. In Wales, church polity took the Congregational form in a remarkable degree. In the principality the number of the ejected clergy was one hundred and six, and of these more than ninety are known in Welsh history as Independents.* What proportion of the ejected in England in 1662 were Congregationalists, or men so much of that 'way' as not to admit of their being fairly classed with Presbyterians, is not to be ascertained with exactness. Our impression is, that the proportion was a large one, much larger than is commonly imagined. The effect of the Act of Uniformity on Congregationalists, was to eject some ministers, to silence all, and in the latter respect at least it was a deep wrong to ministers and people.

* See *History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales*. By Thomas Rees. 1661. A carefully-compiled and highly instructive volume. Reaching the year 1660, the author says:—'Hitherto we find the Welsh Nonconformists distinguished by no other names than Congregationalists or Independents, Anti-Pædobaptists, and Friends or Quakers; but after 1662 some of the ejected ministers were designated Presbyterians, and they were such, at least in sentiment, though they never set up a distinct denomination, but always associated with Congregationalists, under the general name of Protestant Dissenters. The Presbyterian element thus introduced led to some practices which strict Congregationalists could not have approved; such as the ordaining of a number of ministers in one place, who were intended to preside over different churches in other places; but no attempt was ever made to enforce Presbyterian discipline except at Henllan, Carmarthenshire,

We have seen that much had happened before 1660, tending to separate the Independents from the state church principle. The Restoration was to complete the lesson. It is to their honour that no attempt was then made by them to retain any place within the pale of the new establishment. Accept our allegiance as subjects, but leave us to ourselves as religionists, was their language. Milton himself could not have taken a position more becoming—of more dignity. The ecclesiastical controversies in our history during the last two centuries, in so far as they had been conducted by free and enlightened men, had all pointed to this issue. Men were thus to learn how to give to Cæsar his own, and no more—how to render to the Divine Being his own, and no less. In the opinions of good men in the past, Milton saw this ‘knowledge in the making.’ Here are his words: ‘I doubt not if some great and worthy stranger should come among us—wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursu-

about the year 1707, and it was then most resolutely opposed. The reader will therefore understand, when he meets with the word Presbyterian in the ensuing pages, that it only refers to *individuals* who entertained Presbyterian sentiments, and not to a distinct denomination, for such a denomination never existed in Wales. The fact is, that the words Independent and Presbyterian were for ages used in the principality as synonymous terms. The discipline of the churches has invariably been exercised on the Congregational or Independent principle, while several of them were Presbyterian in name.’ P. 175. In England, as Baxter has told us, the word Presbyterian was very commonly applied to all thoughtful and devout people, whether in the established church or out of it. The word Presbyterian came into use as the first substitute for Puritan, and it was often used in a wider latitude afterwards.

BOOK II. ‘ance of truth and freedom,—but that he would cry
 ‘out as Pyrrhus did, admiring the Roman docility and
 ‘courage; “If such were my Epirots I would not despair
 ‘the greatest design that could be attempted to make a
 ‘church or kingdom happy.” Yet these are the men
 ‘cried out against for schismatics and sectaries, as if,
 ‘while the temple of the Lord was building—some
 ‘cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the
 ‘cedars—there should be a sort of irrational men, who
 ‘could not consider there must be many schisms and
 ‘many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber
 ‘ere the house of God can be built. And when every
 ‘stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into
 ‘a continuity, it can be but contiguous in this world;
 ‘neither can every piece of the building be of one form;
 ‘nay, rather, the perfection consists in this, that out of
 ‘many moderate varieties, and brotherly dissimilitudes,
 ‘that are not vastly disproportional, arises the goodly
 ‘and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole
 ‘pile and structure. Let us therefore be more con-
 ‘siderate builders, more wise in spiritual architecture,
 ‘where great reformation is expected.’ So the germs of
 the present were to our great bard the prophecy of the
 future.



CHAPTER X.

Church and State before the Exodus.



IT is not difficult to suppose that the government were really apprehensive concerning the peace of the kingdom during some while after the Restoration. The army had been peaceably disbanded, but the brave and thoughtful men who composed it had not ceased to exist. That large portion of the people, too, whose Puritan tendencies had been so long and so widely manifested, still formed a part of the body politic. The men in power, moreover, knew well that the successive steps in their policy could not fail to force on all such persons a suspicion of treachery in high places, and, in fact, an expectation of the worst. Conscience does not become extinct even where its monitions seem to be little regarded. Rulers who deserve that an avenger should be upon their path, cannot always resist the impression that such a visitant may be at hand.

The course usually taken in such cases is to magnify every sign of discontent, and then to appeal to it as a justification of strong measures. The policy secretly

Misgiving of the government not without reason.

Pacific conduct of the Nonconformists.

BOOK II. approved, can then be safely acted upon, and under seemly expressions of regret that it should have become a necessity. But reasonable as it was that Clarendon should expect indications of active disaffection, it seems they did not come. It is certain that the victims of his lordship's devices were provokingly submissive. The secret was, that while there was much in the conduct of the chancellor and of the prelates to justify suspicion and complaint, the conduct of the king was more hopeful. His majesty's 'Declaration' from Worcester House tended to moderate the feeling of the suffering parties during the greater part of the two years between the return of the king and the passing of the Act of Uniformity. The Quakers were disqualified from becoming politically formidable by their peace principles. The Independents and Baptists, who had inspired so much terror in past years, were now prepared to avow themselves loyal subjects, and were content to petition simply for toleration: while the Presbyterians, great as were their wrongs, had so completely lost the feeling which had animated them at the commencement of the civil war, that to them even the passive obedience test of the Act of Uniformity was by no means the hardest part of that hard measure.*

* Within two months after the return of the king the *Humble Petition* of the messengers of the 'good and humble people in Lincolnshire' was presented to his majesty by the Baptists in those parts. It fully recognised the authority of the crown in all civil cases, but pleaded earnestly that the petitioners might be left to their own conscience in their religious affairs. Speaking of what had befallen them since his majesty's restoration, they say, 'We have been much abused 'as we pass in the streets, and as we sit in our houses, being threatened 'to be hanged if but heard praying to the Lord in our families, and 'disturbed in our so waiting upon God, by uncivil beating at our doors, 'and sounding of horns; yea, we have been stoned when going to our

Baxter was resident in London during the greater part of the two years preceding the enforcement of the Act of Uniformity; and we learn from him that he rarely preached a sermon without the presence of spies, who never failed to make him a preacher of sedition. He once discoursed from the words, 'and he was speechless;' and very naturally said, that however the

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Government spies
and informers.

'meetings, the windows of the place where we have met struck down with stones; yea, taken as evil doers, and imprisoned, when peaceably met together to worship the Most High.' About the same time the London Baptists presented their *Humble Apology*, in which there are the same professions of loyalty, with the same prayer for religious liberty. In August, three months after the restoration, the congregations in North Wales, collected and taught by Mr. Vavasor Powell, were ordered to be broken up. In September the lords issued an order to suppress the voluntary churches in Northamptonshire, and to prevent the meeting of such assemblies in any part of the kingdom. In conformity with this direction, a month later, John Bunyan was sent to Bedford gaol, where he found two ministers and sixty brethren prisoners before him. These things happened in the interval between the landing of the king at Dover, and the declaration from Worcester House in the following October; and such things were common through the country. On the 10th of January, 1661, a royal proclamation was issued, which threatened punishment in the case of any seizure and imprisonment of persons without a lawful warrant, which appears to have encouraged the 'innocent subjects, called by the name of Anabaptists, prisoners in the gaol of Maidstone,' to present their *Humble Petition* to the king. It was followed in the same year by the *Plea for Toleration*, by John Sturgeon, and by *Sion's Groans for the Distressed*. Sturgeon was one of the class of Baptists whose strict republicanism made them enemies to Cromwell, and who, if they were to submit to the rule of a single person, were disposed to look, on certain conditions, to the exiled king. Sturgeon, indeed, had been in communication with the king on this matter before the restoration, and appears to have presented his *Plea* to the monarch with the more confidence on that account. But so harassed were the sects at this juncture, and so moderate were the aspirations of those deemed the most restless. *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience*, 390, et seq.

BOOK II. refusers of grace may excuse themselves and triumph now, they would be speechless at last. But so to speak was to teach disaffection; and the charge passed from the bishop of London to the preacher's diocesan, the bishop of Worcester. 'A multitude of such experiences,' said the good man, 'made me perceive, when I was silenced, that there was some mercy in it, in the midst of judgment. For I could scarce have preached a sermon, or put up a prayer to God, which one or other, through malice, or hope of favour, would not have attempted to convert into a heinous crime.' So, as Seneca hath it, says Baxter, the man who has a wound will cry out upon the mere thought of your touching him.*

We even read of 'Baxter's Plot;' a letter being forged to implicate him in a conspiracy! The case of Kiffin, the Baptist merchant, will be familiar to most of my readers. In both instances, the blunders in respect to facts and dates, were such as to demonstrate that there were informers abroad who were prepared to invent treason, and to swear to it without limit.† The intended implication of Baxter could not be shaped into an accusation. But the proceedings against Kiffin took a serious form. The result, however, was only a more signal disclosure of the secret villany which was then at

* *Life*, 374. In 1661, Baxter made an arrangement with Dr. Bates, of St. Dunstan's, to preach once a week in his church. 'Before this time I scarce ever preached a sermon in the city but I had news from Westminster that I had preached seditiously.' And the same imputation followed him. His books, entitled *The Hypocrite Detected*, *Self-Ignorance*, and *Now or Never*, all consist of sermons preached between 1660 and 1662, and which were published in self-defence as they were delivered. *Life*, 301, 302.

† *Life of Kiffin*.

work, not only with the knowledge, but through the encouragement of the chancellor and his friends. The forgery of letters which should be intercepted, and, intercepted, should place obnoxious persons in the hands of the government as state offenders, was a common artifice. Numerous letters are extant which show that the men whose agency as spies was accepted by the government were many ; that they were very busy, or, at least, affected to be so ; and that the most unprincipled means were not only resorted to, but freely mentioned to their employers. They are always hearing something which seems to promise more. They are constantly detecting movements which, with the aid of a little patience, a little more money, and a little stimulus from themselves, will lead to grave disclosures. But, unfortunately for the chancellor, the hearsays which reach him do not readily take a more definite shape ; and though many things are doing, nothing is done so as to become tangible.

Secretary Nicholas, too, was indefatigable in his endeavours to find out plots. In one of his letters, dated November 16th, 1661, he writes to Sir John Packington, deputy lieutenant of Worcestershire, ‘ thanking him, and ‘ some informer named Simonds, for their services, and ‘ urging the utmost diligence to get to the bottom of ‘ designs mentioned in intercepted letters. In another ‘ letter, addressed to the mayor of Bristol, he informs ‘ him of a messenger to be sent from the council with ‘ directions about one “ John Casebeard,” and deplores ‘ “ that ungrateful fellows bred in rebellion do not know ‘ how to behave themselves ; that the king’s mercy, ‘ instead of making them penitent, only hardens them, ‘ while the devil suggests to them the idea that they are

BOOK II. 'penitent.' The most frivolous rumours, the vaguest 'charges, the most contemptible accusations, were encouraged at Whitehall. The silliness of some of the 'communications from retained and paid informers is 'almost incredible.' It would be well if weakness were the worst. But Edward Potter, a forward instrument of this class, 'had gone about among the disaffected in 'Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk, and had gained "*much 'love among them in a little time,*" but did not dare to 'be too bold at first, but would "*help them forward to 'any plot, and then reveal it.*" This wretched creature 'had afterwards to acknowledge that he did not succeed; '*that he could not get them to work so that they might be 'dealt with; that they would be quiet so long as they 'were let alone;*' and along with a petition for more agents and more money, his advice was, that they should be provoked to mischief by breaking up their congregations.*

The Government affects great alarm.

On the meeting of parliament towards the close of 1661, much was said concerning the rumours which the government had done so much to encourage. Sir John Packington came up from Worcestershire full of discourse about intercepted letters, and the iniquitous Presbyterian plot. This was the plot which made Baxter a conspirator. The pastor of Kidderminster, it was said, had promised to send a large body of armed men to the place of meeting. The commons sent a message to the upper house, stating that intelligence had been received of designs against the peace of the kingdom, in which many disbanded officers and fanatics

* *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago*, 237-239. The above are merely samples of the material that might be largely furnished both from printed and manuscript sources.

were engaged, and inviting their lordships to join with them in urging the king to issue a proclamation which should banish 'all suspicious and loose persons' beyond the liberties of London and Westminster. A month later the chancellor brought the subject before parliament, and with a formal gravity which almost any other man would have found it difficult to sustain. His lordship stated that a suspicious list of one hundred and sixty officers of the late army had been found on the person of a man named Salmon; that a meeting *was* to have taken place in London on the 10th of December; that Shrewsbury, Coventry, and Bristol *were* to be taken about the end of January; that the conspirators 'bragged' much of their allies abroad, and of their arms and numbers at home; and that their action was to commence with assassination. But measures, his lordship said, had been taken to secure the cities threatened with seizure, and in Coventry the soldiers had 'broken up a knot of thieves, and taken twenty.' This alarming communication was made a few days before Christmas, and a committee of both houses was appointed to make further inquiries, and to watch for the safety of the kingdom during the recess usual at that season. It seemed to be overlooked, that while the plot was attributed to the Presbyterians, the chief conspirators named were ardent republicans, men whose contempt of that class of religionists was such that they could not have been brought to trust them for a moment in any such matter. Of the two principal witnesses, one confessed himself bribed, and the other was convicted of having passed under different names. The court, however, still affected alarm, and the rumours which had been so freely circulated by its instruments were made to sub-

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Dec. 19.

BOOK II. serve its policy.* In a few months the Savoy conference was to reach its close, and the Act of Uniformity was to become law.

The Corporation Act.

If the readiness of the new parliament to entertain such malignant and improbable tales was no good omen to the Presbyterians, the passing of the Corporation Act, which took place at this juncture, was a still stronger foreshadowing of the evil to come. This act required that every mayor, alderman, common councilman, and every servant of a corporation, besides taking the common oath of allegiance and supremacy, should make the known declarations against the League and Covenant, and in favour of passive obedience. The reason assigned in support of this measure, was the alleged disaffection of many persons holding such offices, notwithstanding the great clemency shown to all parties by his majesty. It was known that the Presbyterians were still strong in the corporations. By this means they were effectually excluded from them. Baxter relates, that in Kidderminster, of thirteen aldermen and twenty-five burgesses, one man only consented to retain his office on such terms, though not more than two or three in the corporation had ever taken the Covenant. Baxter was accused of having stimulated that portion of his flock to this decision; but not a word had he ever communicated to them on the question.†

Restraint on the Press.

While the government and the parliament were engaged in reducing the corporations of the kingdom to this passive condition, and were bent on imposing so rigorous a restraint on the pulpit, it will not be supposed

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 224-233. *Ralph's Hist. Eng.* i. 51-55.

† *Parl. Hist.* iv. 227, 228. *Baxter's Life*, 376, 377.

that the press was allowed to go free. A law was passed which placed 'the reins in the hands of a licenser, who was generally so careful to seal the lips of falsehood and abuse, that even truth and justice could rarely obtain a hearing.'*

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The blood shed at the Restoration to avenge the death of the late king presents another feature of the interval preceding the enforcement of the Act of Uniformity which should not be overlooked. His majesty's promise of indemnity embraced all offenders who should surrender themselves within forty days, 'excepting such persons as should hereafter be excepted by parliament.' The commons would have restricted their exceptions to seven of the men who had sat in judgment on the king, and to three others officially engaged in those proceedings. But the lords would have extended the same penalty to nineteen persons who had surrendered themselves confiding in the royal promise. That promise, their lordships descended to plead, was merely the promise of a fair trial. The commons, however, continued to evince more humanity, and a wiser sense of justice. They saved the regicides who had obeyed the royal proclamation, and thus rescued the king from the breach of faith in which the peers, with Clarendon at their head, would have involved him. The compromise agreed upon, after three months' deliberation, left fifty-one persons concerned in the death of the king to receive trial. Sentence of death was passed on all the regicides. Of the ten who were selected to suffer, six only had signed the warrant which brought the king to the block. These were Scot, Harrison, Scroop, Carew, Clements, and Jones. With these were Hugh Peters, the army

Fate of the
Regicides.

* Ralph, i. 62.

BOOK II. chaplain; Cooke, who had acted as solicitor-general at the trial; and, strange to say, Haxtel and Hacket, the officers who had been appointed to command the guard placed over the king in his last hours. The sentence of the law against these persons, barbarous in itself, was carried into effect with a studied cruelty, which it would be only revolting to the reader to describe. The sufferers all met their fate without dismay. In place of confessing themselves the greatest of criminals, they boasted of the deed which had brought them to such an end as the most honourable in their lives. The bodies of Bradshaw, Cromwell, and Ireton, were taken from their tombs in Westminster Abbey, drawn upon hurdles to Tyburn, hung there from morning until evening, and then cast into a pit prepared on the spot to receive them. The new parliament would have added to these victims; but the king discouraged the further prosecution of this doubtful policy. The only additional blood shed was that of Sir Harry Vane.*

Case of Sir
Harry Vane

Vane had protested against the trial, and still more against the execution of Charles I. But he was now charged with high treason, and its overt act was said to have been, his taking part with the government which had expelled the present king, and had usurped his authority. Vane pleaded the statute of Henry VII., which justified obedience to a government existing, though holding the place of a government which might be regarded as having a better title to existence. But his opponents insisted that the government supposed in that statute was government in the hands of a king, not in the hands of a pretended parliament or of a common-

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 65, 71, 73, 80, 88, 91, 96. *Clarendon's Life*, ii. 129-134. *Howell's State Trials*, v. 1231, *et seq.*

wealth, and that his present majesty had been Charles II. from the decease of his royal father. According to Sir Edward Coke, however, and other great law authorities, such pleading was altogether invalid. Such a construction of the statute would have sufficed to send every parliamentarian in England to the block. Justice comes from law; law comes from the state; and the parliament, by the chosen arbitrament of the sword, had become the state. If submission to a king, as the exclusive possessor of the supreme power, would be duty; submission to a parliament, as the possessor of such power, should be to an Englishman only more obviously a duty.

But the course pursued towards Vane had been dictated, partly by revenge, and partly by fear. Vane had contributed more than any man now living to the death of Strafford. To his capacity and energy the parliament was largely indebted for the name it acquired soon after the decease of the late king. At the bar, in place of adopting the submissive tone of Lambert, who was tried with him, and who crouched before a court of justice as he had never done in the field, he dared to vindicate his conduct, and to argue that it did not become him to sue for mercy from any power on earth. Charles was deeply offended by this language. Writing immediately to Clarendon, his majesty said, 'He is too dangerous a man to let live, if he can honestly be put out of the way.' Lambert was left to end his days as a state prisoner in Guernsey. Vane was sent to Tower-hill. At the place of execution, the able statesman exhibited the strong religious feeling, and the unshaken integrity and courage, which had been so conspicuous through his public life. He would have addressed the people; but the sheriff interposed more than once to silence him, and

BOOK II. before he had concluded, the trumpets beneath the scaffold were ordered to sound, that his voice might become inaudible. He submitted to his sentence 'with 'so much composedness, that it was generally thought 'the government had lost more than it had gained by 'his death.'*

Sanguinary
policy of
this reign.

The return of the house of Stuart was to have been the return of law, order, and humanity. By this time, such expectations were considerably moderated. Many suffered penalties short of death. The cruelties perpetrated upon the living, the indignities heaped upon the dead, the sending of Haxtel and Hacket to the scaffold as the punishment of obedience to military orders, and the condemnation of Vane, in violation both of the spirit and letter of the law, had combined to force many a gloomy anticipation upon thoughtful men. Nearly a hundred persons were to die as state offenders during this reign—a greater number than were to suffer under that charge during the next hundred years. Not a little of the best blood in England was to be thus shed; and that a policy, at once harsh and despicable, might be pursued successfully, lawyers who had been a disgrace to the bar were to be raised to the bench, and the courts of judicature were to become a terror to all honest men.

* Burnet, i. 163, 164. Howell's *State Trials*. Blackstone, Book iv. c. 6. Phillips' *State Trials Reviewed*, ii. 185, 186. Pepys' *Diary*, i. 275-280. Among the religious sects of the seventeenth century was one under the name of the Vaneists, or Seekers, their profession being, not that they had found truth, but were seeking it. No one can read two pages of Vane's *Mystery of Godliness* without perceiving that the writer, if he has sought truth with any measure of success, had still to learn how to communicate his light satisfactorily to others. But with all his mysticism, Vane was evidently a devout man, and he is not the only man who has reasoned on the speculative aspects of religion with a weakness foreign to his general intelligence.

Mention has been made of the brilliant manner in which Cromwell's veterans acquitted themselves before Dunkirk, and of the flattering terms in which the keys of that important seaport were passed by Louis XIV. to the hands of the Protector. The national pride had been deeply interested in that event, and the value of the acquisition had been highly extolled by the government in the spring of 1662. But a few weeks later, such were the pecuniary difficulties which the king had brought upon himself, and so imperative was his call upon Clarendon for money, that the latter, in an evil hour for his reputation, ventured to suggest the sale of Dunkirk. Charles consented. The ministers opposed to it found resistance vain. Louis caught with eagerness at the proposal, and, after a considerable play of artifice, succeeded in obtaining possession of the place for the sum of five millions of livres. So the meanness of the royal administration came into humiliating contrast with the lofty policy of Cromwell. And this was only the first event in a long series of the same nature which were to follow.*

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Charles was a man who lived to his inclinations. His good or evil came not from principle of any kind, so much as from his passions, temperament, and habit. Though not cruel by nature, he could be cruel rather than be at much trouble to avoid it; and though a lover of kingly power, there were times in which he could be content to govern constitutionally, rather than subject himself to the effort necessary to govern otherwise. His fixed opinion was, that a sovereign whose ministers may be controlled and impeached by a parliament, must be a sovereign only in name. The government, accordingly,

Character
of the King.* Clarendon Papers, xxi.-xxv. Combe's *Sale of Dunkirk*.

BOOK II. to which he would have had all others conformed, was the splendid and luxurious monarchy of France. With regard to religion, his preference was, no doubt, with the church of Rome. It was the system deemed most favourable to his wishes as a king, and to his habits as a man. The viciousness of his career in this country began with the night which followed his entrance into London. From that time, Mrs. Palmer, the wife of colonel Palmer, became his mistress; and long before August, 1662, his majesty's relation to that woman had become notorious. For centuries past, no king of England had been known to keep a mistress. We scarcely need say, that Charles soon had such persons about him, not only in succession, but several together. Nearly all writers agree with bishop Burnet, in censuring 'the mad range of pleasure' to which the king abandoned himself immediately after his accession, and in tracing the embarrassments and disgraces which attended him to the close of his reign to that source.

Court of the
Protector
and of
Charles II.

The court of the Protector was, no doubt, wanting in some of the external and lighter attractions which had long graced the court of Paris, and which were now to become no less conspicuous in St. James's. But of the court under Cromwell, this, at least, could be said, every woman there lived a virtuous, and generally, a devout life; and every man lived to some great principle, or to some high public interest. But, under Charles, the court was a region to itself, and cared only for itself. The man who should there avow himself concerned about the public welfare, or as desiring to live to some useful or honourable purpose, would have been gazed upon with amazement, and classed at once with the fool or the knave. Buckingham, Rochester,

and Killigrew were the model men in that circle—men who lived amidst gallantries, and despised all who did not follow their example. It was a place in which few women could be said to be safe before marriage, and where all seem to have been busy in laying snares for new lovers afterwards. Even the duke of York, with all his supposed conscientiousness on some points, was hardly more mindful of his marriage vow than his brother. Every woman in that gay world knew that taste in dress, grace in manner, and skill in conversation were essential to success. But of anything deserving the name of mental culture, the court beauties of that age were nearly as destitute as the inmates of a Turkish harem. They all lived amidst rivals and admirers; and their talk by day and by night consisted of little else than flinging scandal at each other. Books which presented a reflection of their own manner of life, they might read, but no other. Such were the women who had come into the place of the Parrs and Greys,—the Elizabeths and Hutchinsons of past days. It should be added, that with the men, the love of intrigue, of deep play, and of hard drinking, generally went together.

The blame of such excesses is often laid upon the Puritans; their gloomy rigour, it is said, ensured such a rebound. But it should be remembered, that the men who wielded the power of the English commonwealth can hardly be said to have been Puritans. The small scruples which had so much influence on that party, were little heeded by men capable of entering into the policy of Cromwell. Moreover, a rebound, produced by accidental and artificial causes, should not have been of long continuance. But after the space of

The Commonwealth not to blame for the Restoration excesses.

BOOK II. a generation we see the stream of court manners only deepened in impurity.

Influence of the manners of the court on the country.

From that centre, an influence passed which became perceptible in the homes of the wealthy over the whole kingdom, and especially among the prosperous classes in London. The theatre soon became the great public amusement, and was of course adapted to the public taste. For the first time in our history, females now make their appearance as actresses. As the moral feeling of the auditory deteriorates, the tone of the drama sinks lower and lower. It will be sufficient to say, that ladies went to such performances masked; the scenes they sometimes witnessed, and the language they sometimes heard, being thought to require that concealment of their blushes. Indeed, on the appearance of a new play, women generally abstained from being present, until it became known that they might do so consistently with modesty.*

Known habits of the King before the Ejection of 1662.

In September, 1661, the king was present, with Mrs. Palmer, at the performance of 'Bartholomew Fair,' a piece so satirical on the Puritans that it had not been played the last forty years. 'It is strange,' said Pepys, 'they should already dare to do it, and the king to countenance it.'† Before the close of 1661, Mrs. Palmer became lady Castlemaine. In a diary of the following spring we read: 'My lady duchess of Richmond and Castlemaine had a falling-out the other day; and she calls the latter Jane Shore, and did hope to see her come to the same end.'‡ In May, 1662, Katherine of Portugal arrived, and became the wife of the king, and the following may be taken as a sample of the observation and talk of the time:—'The king dined

* *Apology for the Life of Cibber.*

† *Diary*, Sep. 7.

‡ *Ibid.*

‘at my lady Castlemaine’s, and supped every day and night the last week; and the night the bonfires were made for joy of the queen’s arrival, the king was there; but there was no fire at her door, though at all the rest of the doors almost in the street, which was much observed.’* Charles was married without delay; but in July we read, that he came to see lady Castlemaine as often as ‘ever he did.’ In that same month this man gave the name of his concubine, the wife of another man, in a list of persons who were to be publicly presented to the queen. Katherine erased the name, and in doing so brought upon herself the displeasure of her husband. Charles insisted that his pleasure on this point should be complied with; and the queen at length submitted, but at a cost of feeling which imperilled her life. What marvel if the man who reports such proceedings is heard to say: ‘At court things are in a very ill condition, there being so much emulation, poverty, and the vices of drinking, swearing, and loose amours, that I know not what will be the end of it:’ or that he should have friends who complain to him of the ‘lewdness and beggary’ in that quarter.†

In the meantime, many of the clergy were forward to proclaim their hatred of Puritanism by making light, not only of the reverence of sacred things which it became them to inculcate and observe, but of the lessons of sobriety and decency. Many who were restored to the livings from which they had been sequestered, and

Conduct of the Clergy and of the new House of Commons.

* *Diary*, Sep. 7.

† Aug. 17-31, 1661. Poor Castlemaine was sent after a while by the king’s order, ‘close prisoner’ to the Tower, the word ‘close’ being underlined in the royal warrant. So the guilty lovers were to be secured against further trouble from that quarter.

BOOK II. some young men newly ordained, occasioned great scandal. Baxter assures us that the most disreputable tales concerning their intemperance and other vices were common in all directions.* Nor was there anything in the character of the new house of commons to discountenance such manners. A contemporary, writing in August, 1661, says: 'Roger Pepys told me how basely things had been carried in parliament by the young men, who did labour to oppose all things that were proposed by serious men, that they are the most profane, swearing fellows he ever heard, which makes him think they will spoil all, and bring things into a war again.†

Relation of
this retro-
spect to the
great event
of 1662.

My readers will not be in a condition to determine the value that should be attached to the settlement of 1662, without an effort to realize the social degradation of their country at that juncture. The design of this chapter is to present the state of society as it then was. The business of that hour was to give the freest scope to the levity and malevolence of party passions. It was a time of license, at once savage and frivolous, alien alike from wise thought and virtuous feeling. Men hoped to succeed with the party then in power, not so much by professing any regard to principle, as by sneering at those who did; and not by attending to the graver proprieties of life, so much as by affecting to despise them. It is by organizations in church and state, charged to the full with elements of this order, that the nicer shades of theological truth, and the exact and the spiritual in religious worship, are to be considered and settled for this English nation, and for this English nation during at least two centuries to come! If the maxim be just, that the tree must be

* *Life*, 288, 289.

† *Pepys' Diary*, i. 212.

made good if the fruit is to be good, what was the fruit to have been expected from such a tree?

Good men there were, no doubt, in the party then triumphant. Southampton, Manchester, and Broghill were men of high character, and contributed to give some reputation to the government. Dr. Pearson, Dr. Gauden, and even Dr. Cosin could show that a comparative moderation was not wholly wanting to their order. But the passionate and intolerant men were the majority, and carried everything their own way. In the government, Clarendon was the evil genius. Among the prelates, Sheldon and Morley were the shameless and bad men, and the men who ruled the rest. It is manifest from Clarendon's own language, that nothing was further from his intention than the adoption of a generous policy towards the Presbyterians, or towards any party beside his own. 'It is an unhappy policy,' says his lordship, 'and unhappily applied, to imagine that that class of men can be recovered, and reconciled by partial concessions, or granting less than they demand. And if all were granted they would have more to ask, somewhat as a security for the enjoyment of what is granted, and shall preserve their power, and shake the whole frame of the government. Their faction is their religion. Nor are those combinations ever entered into upon real or substantial motives of conscience, how erroneous soever, but consist of many glutinous materials of will and humour, folly and knavery, and ambition and malice, which make men cling inseparably together, till they have satisfaction in all their pretences, or till they are absolutely broken and subdued, which may always be more easily done than the other.' Such was the charity, the tolerance, and the statesman-

BOOK II. ship of lord Clarendon. Bishop Morley's conduct towards the Presbyterians, and especially towards Baxter, was treacherous, coarse, and unfeeling from beginning to end. No man had promised more—no man was more unmindful of his promises. Concerning Sheldon we shall allow another to speak. 'This was the incendiary! 'this Sheldon, the most virulent enemy and poisoner of 'the English church. Alas! she still feels the taint in 'her very bones. I look on Gardiner as canonizable 'compared with Sheldon. Much as I love the church 'of England, I have no hesitation in asserting, as my 'belief, that nothing in the history of the Inquisition was 'equally wicked, as the conduct of Sheldon and the 'court after the Restoration.* Truly, the retributions of a righteous Providence were on the track of the oppressor. It was not given to the bad men of that day to repent of their evil deeds; but the church they were so intent on perpetuating by such means, was to enter upon a large heritage of disaster as the fruit of their policy.

* Coleridge's *Notes on English Divines*, ii. 22-45.



CHAPTER XI.

August, 1662.



IN the 19th of May the royal assent was given to the Act of Uniformity. On the 24th of the following August the clergy who could not become conformists were to resign their cures to other men. The revised Prayer Book was not published before the 6th of that month. It was by the 17th, only eleven days later, that the men who hesitated to conform were required to attain to their decision, if they wished to take a public farewell of their people. During those eleven days some became possessed of copies of the revised liturgy; great numbers in the remote parishes of England had not seen it even on the 24th; and we scarcely need say, that few men in that interval could have adequately considered its various parts. Some of the ejected pastors complained of being called upon to give their assent *ex animo* to the contents of a volume which they had not read, and could not procure. Many gave their assent without seeing it—assenting in fact to they knew not what.

CHAP. XI.

Publication
of the revised
Liturgy.

BOOK II.

The main terms of Conformity were known before.

But it should be remembered, that the main facts on which the question of conformity and nonconformity rested, were broad, notorious, and well understood. The Act of Uniformity was published between two and three months before it was enforced. It was clear from that document, that episcopal ordination, a renunciation of the League and Covenant, the declaration of passive obedience, and subscription in the form of unfeigned assent and consent, were indispensable conditions to the man who would retain his living; and that the Prayer Book to be thus approved included nearly all the old objectionable matter, with much beside of the same description. These were the matters on which the ministers were to exercise their conscientious thoughtfulness during the three months which preceded the 17th of August.

Provision against hasty ejection.

It should also be borne in mind, that it was provided in the act, that its penalty should not be enforced where conformity by the prescribed day had been prevented by lawful impediment, the decision on any plea of that nature being left 'to the ordinary of the place.' It is probable that any clergyman pleading for delay on the ground that he had not seen the book at all, or had not been a reasonable time in possession of it, would have been heard; but from the known temper of the government, it is no less probable that many a man assumed that no such lenity would be shown if solicited, and took his place with the ejected accordingly, feeling as he so did that hard measure had been dealt out to him. We now know, that instances of the latter kind were not only probable, but that there were many of them.*

* *Mercurius Publicus*, July, August, 1662. *Kennet's Register*, 837. *Documents relating to the Settlement of the Church of England*, 459, 460.

During the ten or twelve weeks between the passing of the act and its enforcement, the talk everywhere on this question, and the discussions from the press concerning it, were incessant, and often bitter. Pleas for toleration, confined to a small sect under Elizabeth, and some while afterwards, now became as household words, and seemed to be finding utterance from half the nation. But the majority continued to iterate the old persecuting maxims, and in impassioned language. The Presbyterians and the Independents obtained repeated audiences of the king and his ministers, and urged their claims to a more considerate treatment so effectually, that his majesty said the act should not be enforced on the appointed day. There should be more time. In this particular, however, as in so many beside, the word of the king was to prove a broken reed.* We know that when the 17th of August came, nearly two thousand clergymen addressed their flocks for the last time.

In London, and in other large cities, the ministers

* Kennet, 747, 850. Clarendon, 156-160. In these communications with the government, says Lingard, 'both Independents and Presbyterians were true to their principles. The Independents sought to obtain indulgence for all, Catholics as well as others: the Presbyterians could not in conscience concur in favour of the Catholics, though they would not oppose them. The king might do as he pleased, but they would not advise him, or encourage him to do it.' *History of England*, xii. 101. Baxter's *Life*, 429. Bishop Parker relates, that at the council where the king was induced to abandon his promise to the Nonconformists, Sheldon, though not then belonging to the privy council, presented himself, and opposed his majesty's purpose 'with such sharpness of wit, copious eloquence, and weight of reason,' that all present agreed to the immediate execution of the law. So, says our authority, 'the bishop freed the Church of England from those plagues for many years.' *Own Times*, 31, 32.

BOOK II.

The mental
struggle.

who did not feel at liberty to conform might confer together, and resolve conjointly on the course to be taken. But the great majority, scattered through the distant parishes of England, knew little of the encouragement derived from such deliberations. The decision, which we must suppose was ultimately in all instances a decision of the individual conscience, was left to be especially of that nature in such cases. We can imagine, though not adequately, the struggle between so many influences which seemed to plead on the side of conformity, and the convictions which forbade it. How much they must forego? How much they must consent to bear? Social influence, the venerable church, the village home, the rural path, so full of pleasant memories, and, above all, the flock, consisting of minds whose thought the pastor had educated, whose moral and spiritual susceptibilities he had quickened and nurtured—from all these there must now be separation. And in the place of all this came the prospect of silent Sabbaths, of years of homelessness, of strange scenes and strange faces, of domestic poverty, of public reproach, and of life passing away with little of the fruit which, in the estimation of such men, can alone give to life a sweetness and value.

The se-
questered
and the
ejected.

It may be said that in all this they were only reaping as they had sown. But the case was not so. The sequestered clergy in the late times were displaced as being immoral, incompetent, or as state-church ministers who would give no pledge of allegiance to the state. But no charge of this nature was brought against the men ejected in 1662. No man whose opinion is entitled to the least consideration will question the general piety of these men. In regard to competency, it was their

strength in that respect, and not their weakness, which had made them so obnoxious; and there was not a man among them who was not prepared to bind himself by oath to all the duties of a good subject. The conformity which had been imposed by means of the Directory was light as air compared with that imposed by the 'unfeigned assent and consent' of 1662, and by the clauses which embraced reordination and passive obedience. Compared with these provisions, even the League and Covenant, as it was adopted in England, becomes comparatively liberal. No fifth, moreover, from his former cure was to pass to the hands of the ejected, under Charles II., and no office of tutor or schoolmaster was to be open to him. Had the vengeance inflicted been merely an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, that would have been bad enough, remembering by whom that law of retaliation has been condemned. But the vengeance of 1662 was carried much further.

This was not the first time the clergy of the English church had seen the government pass into new hands, and had found themselves required to accept new terms of subscription. But in all previous instances the number who allowed their conscience to subject them to any worldly inconvenience had been very small. It was natural that men, little influenced by grave principles themselves, should presume, that humiliating as the present terms of conformity might be, submission would be so far general that no great difficulty would follow. But the natural man often errs when attempting to judge the spiritual man. The conscientiousness of the Nonconformist ministers was to supply a much needed lesson to the men of that generation. It was to be proclaimed as on the housetop, that amidst that reign of

Conscience
in past and
present.

BOOK II. selfishness and falsehood there were men—a large number of public and influential men—who would not lie.*

The 17th
of August,
1662.

The morning of the Lord's-day before the day of St. Bartholomew, the streets of many a city, and the village roads and meadow paths leading to many a parish church, are trodden by men and women, and by youth and age, on whose features a stranger might observe a strange cast of thoughtfulness and sorrow. Those Puritan people have been always distinguishable from other people by their simpler costume and their graver aspect, but to-day they seem to be more than ever a people moving apart, and living to ideas and feelings of their own. In fact, the long-dreaded day has come, in which these pious men and women are to see their pastors where they have been long wont to see them for the last time. The voice which in prayer has so often led their spirit upwards from the earthly sanctuary to the gate of heaven, is to be heard in that sacred place once more, and only once. The lips from which instruction, and a living influence, had so often come to the perplexed and seeking spirit, are to speak once more where they have so often spoken, and only once. The mind which has long been as a shield in danger, a strength in weakness, and a comfort in sorrow to so many minds, is about to be severed from that benign relationship. The shepherd is smitten, and whether the sheep are to be scattered, or to be gathered anew by some stranger hand, no one knows. The preachers, too, on that day—men whose principle and passion it has been to impart and nourish that divine life in other spirits which has been breathed by a divine power into their own—have to look

* 'One thousand eight hundred, or two thousand, were here silenced and cast out.' Baxter's *Life*, 385.

once more from the pulpit on their flock, and only once. Unfriendly eyes are upon them; unfriendly ears are open to their words. All that may be construed uncharitably will be so construed. To be self-possessed at such a time is difficult, and not to be self-possessed must be to fail in the things becoming such men at such a crisis.

CHAP. XI.

Men who expected the Nonconformist pulpits to be charged with invective and bitterness on that day were disappointed. More than one volume of the sermons then preached is extant, and the general tone of the discourses is such as an apostolic spirit only could have dictated.* The great aim of the preachers is to inculcate devout feeling, religious stedfastness, and conscientious integrity, with the special seriousness to have been expected from such men dealing with such themes, and in such circumstances. A few passages from these farewell addresses will best illustrate the nature of the exodus from the established church which dates from that 17th of August, 1662, and which has continued to flow on, and to become more and more formidable from that day to the present.

Farewell sermons.

Baxter had suffered so much from misrepresentation, that his farewell sermon has scarcely a farewell note in it. Two lessons are urged with much emphasis,—unnecessary divisions are to be avoided, and no law of man can make it to be a duty to submit the soul to the direction of blind guides.

Baxter.

* ‘*A Complete Collection of Farewell Sermons, etc.* Revised and corrected from many faults of the former editions, and now collected into one entire volume, more perfect than any other extant.’ London: printed in the year 1663. I have also before me a volume intitled ‘*England’s Remembrancer*,’ consisting of farewell sermons, preached by ‘*Nonconformists in the country*.’ But the names of the preachers are not given in this volume.

BOOK II.

‘But if our guides be taken away,’ say the people, ‘what shall we do? It is not the denial of public liberty,’ says Baxter, ‘that puts an end to the relation between a pastor and his flock, nor any word from man that should cause a poor soul to trust itself for guidance of salvation to one that is not able. A man’s soul is not to be hazarded by being deprived of the offices and ordinances of Christ, and cast upon the conduct of a blind guide, for the pleasuring of a mere man.’ The germ of much in our old English non-conformity is in those sentences.

Dr. Jacomb.

Comfort, says another, to his weeping flock, will not be wanting to ‘those who conscientiously endeavour to please God. The comfort lies in this,—you may suffer, but the Father will not leave you alone. Pleasing God does not secure a man against suffering from man. Sometimes, it rather exposes a man to suffer from men. But though it does not prevent suffering, it takes away the sting and venom. It makes it to be like Samson’s lion when it was slain, in which he found nothing but honey. . . . Pass a charitable interpretation upon our laying down the exercise of our ministry. There is a greater judge than you, who will judge us all at the great day; and to this judge we can appeal before angels and men, that it is not this thing, or that thing, which puts us upon this dissent. It is conscience towards God, and fear of offending him. I censure none who differ from me, as though they displeased God. But yet, as to myself, should I do thus and thus, I should certainly violate the peace of my own conscience, and offend God, which I must not do; no, not to secure my ministry, though that is, or ought to be, dearer to me than my

‘ very life. How dear it is, God only knoweth. Do CHAP. XI.
 ‘ not add affliction to affliction. Be not uncharitable in
 ‘ judging of us, as if through pride, faction, obstinacy,
 ‘ or devotedness to a party, or, which is worse than all,
 ‘ an opposition to authority, we do dissent. The Judge
 ‘ of all hearts knows it is not so.’* Such was the drift
 of the last words from the lips of many a preacher on
 that memorable day.

The farewell words of Dr. Bates, the preacher who Dr. B t s.
 brought more general culture to his pulpit services than
 any man of his time, do not extend to more than a
 dozen lines. The crowd waited for them, and they
 were as follows:—‘ I know you expect I should say
 ‘ something as to my Nonconformity. I shall only say
 ‘ this much. It is neither fancy, faction, nor humour,
 ‘ that makes me not to comply, but merely for fear of
 ‘ offending God. And if after the best means used for
 ‘ my illumination—as prayer to God, discourse, study
 ‘ —I am not able to be satisfied concerning the lawful-
 ‘ ness of what is required if it be my unhappiness to
 ‘ be in error, surely men will have no reason to be angry
 ‘ with me in this world, and I hope God will pardon
 ‘ me in the next.’ So, the man who might have been a
 dean, and, probably, something more, consented to
 become an ejected and a silenced minister.

Calamy said little bearing on the times. But there Calamy.
 are straits, he remarked, which are ‘ suffered for God
 ‘ and a good conscience. Those martyrs (Heb. xi.
 ‘ 36, 37) were driven to great straits. But those were
 ‘ straits for God and a good conscience, and those straits
 ‘ were the saints’ greatest enlargements, so were they
 ‘ sweetened to them by the consolations and supports of

* Dr. Jacomb.

BOOK II. 'God's Spirit. To them, a prison was a paradise. They
 'took joyfully of the spoiling of their goods. They
 'departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing
 'that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name.
 '(Acts v. 41.) Straits, for a good conscience, are greatest
 'enlargements. Paul, therefore, glories in this strait,—
 'Paul a prisoner.' So the most popular preacher in
 England, at whose church door some sixty carriages
 were commonly seen upon a week-day, submits to be
 silenced, and chooses obscurity rather than a bishopric.

Mr. Lye. Mr. Lye, of Allhallows, among his last advices, said
 emphatically—mind your families. 'Mind your fami-
 'lies more than ever. You have your children and
 'servants calling loudly upon you. Let the Amorite,
 'Peresite, and Jebusite do what they will, but for you,
 'and your children, and your servants, do you serve the
 'Lord. When we cannot hear a sermon, then read a
 'sermon. If we cannot hear a sermon well preached,
 'godly parents should read sermons well penned. If
 'nothing new, let the word repeated and meditated call
 'to mind what you have heard. Let the debauched
 'Atheists know they have something among you to be
 'feared—that is, your prayers. Let them know that, if
 'you have not the opportunities you have had, you will
 'improve those you have.' Councils to this effect came
 from the lips of many a pastor; and the Nonconformist
 families of England, in being obedient to them, con-
 served their piety through many a dark day to come.
 The preacher supposes his flock to ask what pious
 people are to do when ordinances and a faithful ministry
 shall fail them. His answer is, 'Wherever Christ finds
 'a tongue to speak I am bound to find an ear to hear.
 'I would not be mistaken. I bless God I am not

‘turned out of my ministry for being a schismatic. CHAP. XI.
 ‘Nor know I any of my brethren that are so. But this
 ‘I would advise—I speak as though I were dying—do
 ‘whatsoever lies in your power to hear such men as you
 ‘think to be godly. Whall shall you do? What did
 ‘you twenty or thirty years ago? What did the good
 ‘old Puritans do? They were not schismatics. As
 ‘much as lies in you, hear them whom in your conscience
 ‘you judge God doth hear.’

Mr. Sclater, incumbent of St. Katherine’s in the
 Tower, concludes his last sermon with these words: ‘I
 ‘suppose you all know there is an act come forth by
 ‘supreme authority, and it is not for us to quarrel at it,
 ‘but to submit to it, and to hold correspondency with
 ‘it as far as we can with a good conscience—and there
 ‘being many injunctions in it, with which many beside
 ‘myself cannot comply, we are willing to submit to the
 ‘penalty. You have for many years had the benefit of
 ‘my poor labours. I have fulfilled near towards forty
 ‘years, and performed my service to God, Christ, and
 ‘his people, and, I bless His name, not without accept-
 ‘ance and success. My work, so far as I know, is now
 ‘at an end. My desire is that you, whose hearts have
 ‘been inclinable to wait upon God in the way of my
 ‘ministry, may walk in love to God, love to Christ, and
 ‘love to one another; that you may labour to manifest
 ‘a noble, generous spirit in overcoming the world’s
 ‘errors, corruptions, false doctrines, and unwarrantable
 ‘worship. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.
 ‘Amen.’

Mr. Sclater
 —founder
 of the
 Church at
 the Weigh
 House.

In the case of some, the experiences which had come
 upon them appear to have awakened a freedom of
 thought which foreshadowed things to come. ‘The

Collins.

BOOK II. ‘Church’s power,’ says one of the preachers, ‘is not authoritative. It is only ministerial. It is not to give laws against the laws of Christ. Hence, when the name of a church is set up, let us see whether that church walks in the ways of Christ, whether she be his spouse or not. For it is not what a church practises, but what they are warranted to practise; not what they hold as truth, but what they are warranted to hold as truth. When matters of antiquity are pretended, say with Ignatius, *Jesus Christus est mea Antiquitas*—Jesus Christ is my antiquity. So say—truth is my antiquity. For though an opinion has been practised a thousand years, men may have the word of truth in their hearts which is more ancient than all.’

Evening of
the 17th of
August.

The evening of the day on which nearly two thousand ministers addressed themselves as above to their several congregations, must have been memorable in the homes of many a Nonconformist pastor, and of many a Nonconformist family. The shadows of that summer night fell upon those homes as they had often fallen, but never before to bring upon them so general a sadness. The evening psalm, we think, must have been set to notes of more than usual pathos; and the evening prayer, as it passed from the lips which offered it, must have been followed by tears and sobs from many a wife and mother, as the little ones clung about her, wondering what this new trouble could mean. It was a night of weeping, be sure of it.

Baxter regrets that many Nonconformists, in place of submitting patiently to this treatment, taking it as a chastisement for their past negligence and sin, became indignant, and began to predict that a government which

had become so perfidious and oppressive could not be of long continuance. Most of our readers, we suspect, will be much more inclined to sympathize with the feeling of such persons, than with that of their censor.

Many hundreds of able ministers were now thrown upon the world without homes, and without the means of subsistence. In the case of the great majority of them, it was not possible that they should have saved anything with which to meet such times. Their incomes were often not more than thirty or forty pounds a-year, rarely exceeding seventy or eighty, and those above a hundred were very few. The time of their expulsion, too, added much to their suffering. It had been fixed at first to take place at Michaelmas; and being afterwards fixed for the earlier day, the 24th of August, it left the yearly tithe, then on the eve of becoming due, to be received by their successors, who were thus allowed to reap where they had not sown. The friends of the ejected ministers, moreover, were not among the wealthy so much as among the middle class and the poor; and many who were disposed to assist them, feared to do so openly, lest they should be accused of encouraging schism, or, it may be, conspiracy.*

CHAP. XI.

Circumstances of the ejected.

* ‘There were many citizens of London who had then a great compassion on the ministers, whose families were utterly destitute of maintenance, and they would have relieved them, and had such a method that the citizens of each county should help the ministers of that county. But they durst not do it, lest it should be judged a conspiracy. Wherefore I went for them to the lord chancellor, and told him plainly of it, how compassion moved, but that the suspicion of these distempered times deterred them; and I desired to have his lordship’s judgment, whether they might venture to be so charitable without misinterpretation or danger. And he answered, “Aye! God forbid but that men should give their own according as their charity leads them!” So having his pre-consent, I gave it them for encourage-

BOOK II.

Divided
feeling
among the
Noncon-
formists.

In many places, the new incumbents were men whom the congregations attached to the ejected pastors could not fail to receive with feelings of disgust. Hence some abstained wholly from the public worship, and were content to avail themselves of the private services of their former ministers; while others continued to be Conformists, at least so far as to be present in church when the sermon was delivered. The Covenant, as interpreted by some, permitted that extent of compliance; but, as interpreted by others, it was strongly opposed to such temporizing.

While the people were thus divided, the ministers were far from being of one mind. Some remained in the established church, not only as worshippers, but as communicants; while others declined engaging in any of her services. Some insisted that it became them to preach in the streets and the fields, so long as there were people willing to hear them; and they continued to do so until they were sent to prison. Others deemed it much wiser to restrict their good offices to private intercourse. The preaching of two or three sermons in the open air might be followed by years of incarceration, which, of course, meant seclusion from many other forms of usefulness.

‘ment. But they would not believe that it was cordial, and would be ‘any security to them. So they never durst venture on such a method, ‘which might have made their charity effectual. But a few that were ‘most willing did much more than all the rest, and solicited some of ‘their own acquaintances for their counties’ relief.’ *Life*, 386. Great as the sufferings awaiting the Nonconformists were, Dr. Walker, in the preface to his volume, intimates, not only that the number of sufferers were ‘five times’ greater among the Episcopal clergy, but that the ‘sufferings were a *thousand* times greater.’ P. xiii. Something has been said elsewhere (pp. 111-122) as to the credit that should be given to an author who could write in this manner; but for something further on this subject the reader is directed to Appendix II.

But if the more cautious censured the ardent as not wise, the more ardent censured the cautious as not faithful. Even those who ministered to their former charge from house to house only, did not escape trouble. They were all marked men, all accounted malcontents, and supposed to be more or less implicated in every rumoured conspiracy. Many of them, on the barest suspicion, were cast into prison.*

The clergy of the established church, from 1662, consisted of several distinct classes. No man expected the Independents to submit to the new order of things. State-churchism in any form was not in logical accordance with the leading principle of their polity, and the national church as now settled contravened that principle in almost every way possible. But there were many Presbyterians who succeeded in reconciling their conscience to the new terms of conformity. Some of the bishops, it seems, though they would not cede a dispensing power to the crown, took such power to themselves, informing the men whom they were disposed to favour, that to subscribe 'in their own sense' would be sufficient. Many, we are assured, acted on this concession, accepting the words of the parliament, but accepting them with their own latitude of meaning. In all parties of Conformists at this juncture, there were men whose subscription included little more, according to their own mental reservation, than a consent to *use* the revised Prayer Book. Even among the Presbyterians, there were zealous royalists who had come to look on the late war as rebellion, and on the League and Covenant as included under that condemnation. Many professed to be convinced by certain books which were then published

Conformists
—Presby-
terians.

* Baxter's *Life*, 385.

BOOK II. in defence of conformity: many were young men, little versed in such controversies; and many, it was believed, were mainly influenced by care in behalf of their wives and children. Baxter speaks of his Presbyterian brethren who conformed, as being generally able and worthy men; but adds the significant remark, that when once they had decided on that course, they began to avoid their brethren who were not disposed to follow their example, and never evinced any concern to know why they had not so done. The truth is, we may account some men of this class as worthy men, but of others it is difficult to form so favourable a judgment. But of the seven thousand clergy who retained their livings, a very large proportion must have been men of this party, becoming Episcopalian Conformists for the first time in 1662.

Conformists
—the old
Royalists.

Distinguished from conformists of this description, were the old royalist party—men who were admirers of the church as she existed before the civil war, and were prepared to vindicate all her present pretensions. Some of these were young men, rash and ill-informed, intent on their own interests, and on the free indulgence of their passions, often becoming a scandal to their profession. The more learned of this class were ardent in their support of a lordly prelacy, and hoped to see the ecclesiastical power strong enough to crush out all Nonconformity. But even in that connexion there were some comparatively moderate men, who did not more than partially approve the court policy, who said they should not themselves have subscribed if they had not been allowed to do so with some latitude, and who would willingly have seen a less vigorous course pursued towards the Nonconformists. Such feelings, however,

were individual and private ; the cost of giving public expression to them would have been considerable.

Between these two classes, who may be described as the new conformists and the old, was a third class, known at the time, and long afterwards, as the Latitudinarian school. This party consisted of men who, for the most part, regarded church forms and church polity as matters so undetermined by the sacred writings, that it rested with the church or the state to settle all such things on a principle of expediency or fitness, and, in their view, as a rule, the things so sanctioned it became a wise man to accept. According to Baxter, the Latitudinarians were mostly Cambridge men. In philosophy, they were Platonists or Cartesians ; in theology, they were Arminians ; some of them were Universalists, and some of them indulged in still freer speculations. Such persons were not the men to have given us our present Prayer Book, with its unfeigned assent and consent ; but as the competent authorities had imposed these things, they conformed to them, each with his own measure of secret reservation. The names of such men as More, Cudworth, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson have shed an enduring lustre on this party.

If the Conformists were not without their strong lines of difference, the same was true of the Nonconformists. Some men left the church in 1662, who would have remained in it had it been allowed to stand as before 1640. They were, in fact, Episcopalians, in favour of a diocesan episcopacy, of the old ceremonies, and of the old subscription, and, though clergymen, had lived through the late times without taking the Covenant. But the required ‘ assent and consent to all things now imposed,’ they could not give. Nowhere in the ranks

CHAP. XI.

Conformists
—the Latitudinarians.

Nonconformists—
Episcopalians.

BOOK II.

of Nonconformity was the homage to integrity greater than in the case of these men.

Non-sectarian party.

But a much greater number consisted of persons whose ecclesiastical position it is not easy to describe. They would not be strictly identified with any party. They were not opposed to a moderate episcopacy, or to the use of a liturgy. They saw much to approve among Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents. In their practice they must be said to have belonged to the Congregational order more than to any other. But with great numbers in this large and liberal party, the 'assent and consent' proved an insuperable difficulty.

Presbyterians and Independents.

But there was an avowed Presbyterian party, and an avowed Independent party. Concerning the former, Baxter ventures to say, they 'are the soberest, and most judicious, unanimous, peaceable, faithful, able, constant ministers in this land, or that I have heard or read of in the Christian world. What I am able to say, I state without respect of persons, in obedience to my conscience, and from my long experience.' Of his old opponents, the Independents, too, the good man is constrained to say, they 'are, for the most part, a serious, godly people, some of them moderate, going with Mr. Norton and the New England synod, and little differing from the moderate Presbyterians; and as well ordered as any party I know.' Then follows his complaint of some as being too self-reliant, and too much given to divisions.

Reasoning of Conformists.

The reasonings by which the Conformists endeavoured to justify their conformity were of every imaginable description. It was maintained that the declaration, not to endeavour any alteration in the government, did not mean that *no* change, but that no *essential* change, should

be attempted. The declaration, that no man, 'on any pretence whatsoever,' should take up arms against the king, did not mean, it was said, that *no* circumstances could justify resistance, but that the circumstances must be *very special*. Re-ordination, if not necessary in the spiritual sense, might be expedient in the ecclesiastical sense, as having respect specially to the new establishment of 1662. The 'unfeigned assent and consent,' though clearly designed to express a mental approval of all and everything in the Book of Common Prayer, was made endurable by insisting that no man could use these words in that sense honestly, that the government could not have intended to shut up the ministers of religion to the guilt of perjury, and that this language should not in consequence be understood as binding the subscriber to more than a pledge to use the book. Similar ingenuities were placed in requisition to soften the exceptionable language in baptism, confirmation, and the absolution of the sick, in the communion and the burial services, and in some other matters.

Nothing could be more palpable than the contradiction between subscription as it should have been according to law, and as it was in reality. Hundreds of consciences, accordingly, of the more flexible description, passed the prescribed ordeal. But there were nearly two thousand men among the clergy of that day to whom words had meaning, and who found themselves shut up, by the honest meaning of words, to the necessity of becoming Nonconformists. It becomes us to look at this spectacle, exhibiting terms of conformity so literal and rigid on the one side, and modes of subscription so lax and meaningless on the other. The extent to which this nation has been demoralized by the policy which placed her clergy

Fallacy and moral mischief of such reasoning.

BOOK II. in such circumstances, exposing their integrity in the gravest matters of their vocation to so much unavoidable suspicion, the Omniscient only can know.

Ritualism in
the history
of religion.

In this controversy, the Nonconformists of 1662, and the Puritans before them, were right, and their opponents were wrong. Not that religious ceremonies are without value. Our social relations, and our political relations, have their forms, which are significant of ideas, and which are perpetuated on that account. The pressure of the hand and the bowing of the head, the installation of the knight and the crowning of a king, are social and civic ceremonies. It is natural, accordingly, that there should be something of this nature connected with religion. But in religion, if ritualism has its use, its history is, to a large extent, a history of its abuse. This abuse has, in fact, been so common, that error in this direction may be said to constitute one of the besetting sins of humanity. There are tendencies in man which make religion, in some form, a necessity of his nature. But it is no less certain, that there are tendencies in him which ensure that the religion commonly chosen by him will not be a spiritual religion. The result has been a compromise. Man becomes religious, but his religion is a formalism. It is not an inner life, but an outward observance. It consists, not in what a man is, but in what he does. The seen takes the place of the unseen. To be ritually accurate is to be religiously safe.

The religion of the ancient heathendom was wholly of this nature. Its divinities were either so unintelligible, or so little capable of awakening affection, that the external forms of religion were the only matters left to constitute religion. It is so, to this day, wherever a false religion is ascendant. Even the ancient Hebrews were not

wholly an exception to this rule. Moses and Isaiah might be spiritual men, but what was the condition of the mass of the people in their times? In the Pharisees of the New Testament we see the formalism which prophets had so often exposed and censured, and to so little purpose, full blown. In the Gospel narratives, we find our Lord and the Pharisees face to face at every step, and no lessons in His teaching are more reiterated than those which were designed to lay bare the cardinal error of that sect. Was all this for the sake of those Pharisees? No; it was because He saw that the tendencies which made Pharisees then, were in human nature, and would not cease to make Pharisees to the end of the world.

When our Lord said, 'Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God,' He proclaimed a warning truth which was not only to sound in the ears of the men who listened to Him, but was to sound on through all the ages. He knew well that men who flatter themselves with the thought of being very religious, because they extend their tithing to the mint and the rue, would be sure to persuade themselves that they could not cease to be religious, however open to the charge of being wanting in 'judgment,' and in the 'love of God.' The mint and the rue would suffice to give them a sense of being religiously safe, and their great solicitude would be to feel religiously secure, without the necessity of being spiritually renewed. It is in the nature of formalism, moreover, that it should not only dispense with the weightier matters of religion, but that it should devise sophistries to justify the neglect of such matters. The ecclesiasticism of the priest

BOOK II.

and the Levite took all their humanity out of them. The Samaritan shows us what the qualities are which a rigid ecclesiasticism destroys. Such men compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and that narrative shows us how even heathenism might become corrupted under such influence. Men of this order not only neglect the weightier matters; they learn to hate them, and to hate the men who seem to be mindful of them. Hence the most bitter persecutors of pious men have not been such men as the Buckinghams and the Rochesters in the court of Charles II.; but rather such ecclesiastical zealots as the Sheldons and the Morleys. Secular politicians would have done comparatively little harm to the church, if Pharisaical priests had not been at their side. The aim of the Inquisition has been to force and drill mankind into a visible subserviency. If that is accomplished its great work is done. It should be admitted, that the zealous ritualist may not always mean to send these influences abroad, and his zeal may consist with sincere piety. But we speak of this phase of religious life, if such it may be called, as it is before us generally on the great surface of history. The error is there; and there, as the most subtle, the most pervading, and the most fatal, pertaining to religious history.

One of the great designs of Christianity was to redeem men from illusions of this nature. Had it been designed that a ritual at all like that of the Hebrew nation should have a place in connexion with the Gospel, we should have found a book of Leviticus in the New Testament. Ritualism is a mode of picture-teaching, which is in place with the weak, but not with the strong. In the childhood of the church this tuition by a school-

master had a fitness, but it ceases to be appropriate when the church has come to full age, and when, for the most part, the things intended by such symbols have become so clear as to be obscured rather than illustrated by them. In this department of intelligence the Puritans and the Nonconformists had much to learn. But the distinction between them and their opponents was, that they really were learning, while the party opposed to them did worse than stand still; their movement through a hundred years past had been a backward movement. Every change since the days of Edward VI. had been a change in the direction of a more rigid and a more exceptionable ritualism. Their latest performance in this way, in place of being their best, was their worst. It was resolved, if possible, to subject the religious mind of England to a perpetual pupilage. But that degrading policy was to be resisted, and we know the result. St. Paul has shown us that uniformity of observance was as nothing in his estimation, compared with a common candour, kindness, and forbearance among Christians.* The church will attain some day to the state which the apostle has depicted; and in the meanwhile it becomes Nonconformists to be thankful that it has been given to them to make the nearest approach towards the larger liberty, and the higher spiritual manhood, which will then be realized.

* Romans xiv.



BOOK III.

English Nonconformity since 1662.



CHAPTER I.

Bad Treatment and the Good Confession.



WE have seen how the king's promise to postpone the execution of the Act of Uniformity was frustrated. But Charles was not satisfied.

CHAP. I.

Charles is
not satisfied

He knew the charge of unfaithfulness to his promise was widely preferred against him, and he appears to have felt that circumstances had seemed to justify the accusation. No doubt his majesty was desirous of reserving a dispensing power to the crown, by any means available to that end, and would gladly have extended freedom of worship to Catholics. But, wholly apart from these considerations, he was not pleased that Nonconformists of all classes should have so much reason to doubt his sincerity, and to be dissatisfied with his policy. Accordingly, Charles brought this question again before his council. The ministers in favour of toleration argued that the crown had always possessed the power to suspend penal laws in matters of religion ;

BOOK III. that the late king, and his father before him, had raised a yearly revenue by such exercises of the royal supremacy. The result was, that about three months after St. Bartholomew's day, the king issued a Declaration designed to refute certain 'scandals' which had been cast upon the government.

The King's
second De-
claration.

It was affirmed by many, that the Act of Indemnity had not given, and was not likely to give, its promised security. The king now pledged himself that it should be faithfully observed. The four or five thousand well-armed troops retained by the crown were described as the nucleus of a force which was to crush English liberty, and to assimilate this country to the military monarchies of the continent. But nothing, said his majesty, is further from my thoughts; all that is sought by such means is protection—protection for you more than for myself. Many people persisted in saying the king was a Papist. Charles affirmed that he had given the strongest proofs of his sound Protestantism, and that, while he certainly was desirous of extending some favour to his Catholic subjects, who had so well deserved it at his hands, he wished them to understand that no ostentatious or open form of their worship would be sanctioned by him. The grand cause of discontent, however, came from the proceedings of the government towards the Protestant Nonconformists. His majesty well remembered his words from Breda. But it was natural that his first care should be given to the settlement of the established church. 'That is done, and we are glad to lay hold on 'this occasion to renew unto all our subjects concerned 'in those promises of indulgence, this assurance, that so 'far as concerns the penalties upon those who do not 'conform, but modestly and without scandal perform

‘ their devotions in their own way, we shall make it our
 ‘ special care, so far as in us lies, without invading the
 ‘ freedom of parliament, to incline their wisdom, at this
 ‘ next approaching session, to concur with us in making
 ‘ some such act for that purpose, as may enable us to
 ‘ exercise, with a more universal satisfaction, that power
 ‘ of dispensing which we conceive to be inherent in us.
 ‘ Nor can we doubt of their cheerful co-operation with us
 ‘ in a thing wherein we do conceive ourselves so far
 ‘ engaged, both in honour, and in what we owe to the
 ‘ peace of our dominions.’ *

On the appearance of this document, the Independents sought communication with the government. Philip Nye assured Baxter that he had found the king intent on securing a toleration to all peaceable Nonconformists, and urged that the Presbyterians and Congregationalists should join in an effort to obtain an act of parliament on the basis of this new declaration. But the Presbyterians would not be parties to any scheme ceding liberty of worship to the Catholics. The Independents did not share in this scruple. The prelates and the zealot church party were passionately opposed to the entire proposal; and the course taken by the Presbyterians left the question wholly at their disposal. By this time, the cry against popery had been so raised by that party, that, encouraged as it was by the Presbyterians, no cry opposed to it was to prevail against it during this reign or the next.

But in conformity with the wishes of the king, lord Robartes, now lord privy seal, and lord Ashley, brought a bill into the upper house, which proposed that the sovereign should be empowered to dispense, at his

How the
 King's
 second
 Declaration
 failed.

The Decla-
 ration is
 repudiated
 by Parlia-
 ment—
 Feb. 23.

* Kennet, 848-891.

BOOK III. discretion, with oaths, subscriptions, and promises of obedience, in relation to the established church. This motion fell as a spark on the feeling of both houses. The commons, without waiting for the bill in the upper house to come before them, presented an address to his majesty, in which they maintained, that in leaving the question in respect to the claims of tender consciences to the judgment of parliament, the royal promise had been amply fulfilled; that the Act of Uniformity was the answer of parliament on that subject; and that to intrust the proposed power to the crown would be to legalize schism, and to open the way to every kind of disorder. In the lords, the opposition to the bill was led by the earl of Southampton, who found zealous supporters in the prelates. On the second day, Clarendon, though suffering from the gout, made his appearance, and his bitter earnestness sufficed to seal the fate of the bill. It was tacitly dropped. Charles endeavoured to conceal his mortification. But it was observed that his manner towards Southampton and Clarendon had changed, and the bishops had fallen irrevocably in his estimation.*

Nor did this measure of success satisfy the triumphant parliament. Attempts were made, not only to secure a more certain enforcement of the penal laws against Catholics and Protestant Nonconformists, but to make more stringent additions to them. In these proceedings, however, the intolerant confederacy in both houses, powerful as it was, did not immediately succeed. The session passed without any new enactment of that nature.

* Lords' Journals, xi. 478-491. *Life of James*, i. 428. Clarendon, 245, *et seq.*

But the doctrine of the parliament continued to be, that tranquillity must be secured by greater rigour; and the policy of the government still was, to stimulate the disaffection produced by its own bad laws into conspiracy, by means of spies and informers. Two months after the memorable St. Bartholomew's day, six men, of mean condition, were charged with having conspired to seize the Tower and Windsor Castle, to kill the king, and to set up a commonwealth. The witnesses were two spies. Two of the prisoners made a sort of confession, and were pardoned. The remaining four were executed. Not only Independents and Levellers, but Presbyterians and Quakers, were said to have been pledged to this enterprize. Even this pitiable proceeding was supposed to have been useful to the government, by helping to strengthen the rumours of existing discontent, and by furnishing a pretext in favour of its oppressive action.*

CHAP. I.
The Govern-
ment
still profits
by spies and
conspiracy.

In the autumn of the following year, we find the government in active correspondence concerning an alleged conspiracy in the north. No doubt, there were men abroad at that time, who were ready to have joined in any measure of revolt which could give the promise of success; and some men of that class appear to have met and talked so as to have come within the law of treason. But it is no less certain, that the character and number of the persons implicated were such, that the only danger to be apprehended, was a danger to the public liberty from the use which the intolerant men in parliament, and in the ministry, would be likely to make of such a discovery. The way to put down their secret meetings, said the king, is to allow open meetings to be

* Ralph, *Hist. Eng.* i. 82-84.

BOOK III. lawful. But the party ruling in England at that juncture was of another mind.

The Con-
venticle
Act—
March 16,
1664.

The parliament in its fourth session gratified the court by its measures concerning the revenue; and its next care was 'to make another sacrifice to the church. It 'was not enough that the Nonconformists were ejected, 'and branded as schismatics. They were still followed, 'caressed, and admired by the multitude. And this 'was what their denouncing adversaries could neither 'endure nor forgive. The shepherd had already felt 'their fury; the flock was now to be scattered. And it 'is extremely worthy of remark, that in the act to pre- 'vent and suppress seditious conventicles, disloyalty and 'schism are blended together, and it is presumed that no 'man can be a sectary without being a traitor.* This act consisted of twenty-three sections. Its substance is, that wherever five or more persons above the household shall be assembled, under colour or pretence of any exercise of religion in other manner than is allowed by the liturgy or practice of the church of England, the persons so offending shall be subject to a fine of 5*l.*, or three months' imprisonment, for a first offence; to a fine of 10*l.*, or six months' imprisonment, for a second; and to a fine of 100*l.*, or transportation for seven years to some one of his majesty's plantations beyond the seas, for a third. Husbands, whose wives should be present, were made liable to fine on their behalf, though not themselves present. It was further provided, that any jailor allowing a person committed on this act, to go at large, or any person at large to join with him in prison in any religious exercise

* Ralph, *Hist. Eng.* i. 104.

of the nature prohibited, shall be fined 10*l.* for every such offence.*

CHAP. I.

This iniquitous statute was not to be a dead letter, as we shall presently see. But every step taken in this direction, in place of giving the government and the parliament a stronger sense of security, only tended to deepen their distrust of the public feeling, and to dispose them to hold out still stronger inducements to the intrigues of men who were prepared to get up conspiracies when they could not discover them. Rumours of discontent and of treason were artfully raised and spread through the country. The Nonconformist ministers were special objects of enmity, if not of suspicion. True, their voice was no longer heard from the pulpit, and the Conventicle Act was to put an end to their private teaching. They dared not meet a circle of friends without counting heads, to be sure that not more than four visitors were present. Still, to a great extent, they were in the midst of their old charge, and kindly hearts are ingenious in devising ways to interchange the expressions of affection. It is easy to imagine how the new incumbent would look upon the old one as he passed him in the street, or on the village road. The men in high places, too, who were so intent on utterly extinguishing English Nonconformity, could hardly be at rest as they saw this great spiritual power perpetuating itself in the land—a power which they would be sure to regard as hostile to themselves. To drive these injured men—potent in their weakness—wholly from the land, would have been difficult, hardly possible, assuredly dangerous. So the next bad thing to that was to be done.

The Five
Mile Act.

* *Documents relating to the Settlement of the Church of England in 1662*, 477-480.

BOOK III.

The Five Mile Act is intituled 'An Act for restraining Nonconformists from inhabiting Corporations.' It is grounded on the statement, that Nonconformist ministers 'have settled themselves in divers corporations 'in England, sometimes three or more of them in a 'place, thereby taking an opportunity to distil the 'poisonous principles of schism and rebellion into the 'hearts of his majesty's subjects, to the great danger of 'the church and kingdom.' It is enacted accordingly, that such persons shall not 'come or be within five 'miles of any city, or town corporate, or borough 'sending burgesses to parliament,' or within the same distance of any place where they may have exercised their ministry. The act further provides, that in the place of their banishment, neither the ministers, nor the female members of their families, shall occupy themselves in any way in the work of education. Every offender against this law was liable to a fine of 40*l.*; and what was still more serious, the magistrate might tender to him the oath of passive obedience, and on his refusing to take it, might send him to prison for six months.*

So between two and three thousand ejected or silenced ministers, were banished into thinly-peopled and rude

* This oath is known in our history by the name of the 'Oxford Oath,' the parliament which imposed it being held in Oxford, on account of the plague in London. Some of the London ministers took it, but it was in a sense which the terms certainly did not warrant. I have before me a MS. in the handwriting of Philip Henry, in which these ministers state their case. In the clause, 'I will not at any time endeavour any alteration of government in church or state,' they understood the word 'endeavour' as restricted to 'seditious and tumultuous' endeavour. Bridgman, it is said, in open court, admitted this to be the meaning of the oath, Keeling, who was present, not contradicting; and in this sense they took it. They state also, that 'a noble lord assured them, that when he moved in the house that the

districts, many of them away from books, nearly all of them away from friends. Almost everywhere, the population about them would be an ignorant, coarse-minded, and hostile people. Such means of subsistence as might have been continued to them while in the midst of persons who had derived spiritual benefit from their labours became uncertain, and might be expected to fail them utterly ere long, in their exile. Baxter found his Patmos in the small village of Acton. Dr. Owen fixed his tent in the adjoining parish of Ealing. So it was over the whole kingdom.

One circumstance connected with the origin of the Five Mile Act must not be passed over. In 1663, and in the following year, the plague ravaged the greater part of Holland, particularly Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and many fears were entertained concerning it in England. In December, 1664, it was reported by authority that two persons had died of that malady in St. Giles's. From that time to the ensuing April, the weekly bills of the several parishes without the walls of the city exhibited an increase of deaths which produced alarm. In the beginning of May there was no room to doubt that many had perished of the fearful disease in St. Andrew's,

The Non-conformists and the sufferers from the plague.

‘ word *sedition* might be added to *endeavour*, the bishops of Canterbury and Winchester said it was preposterous to understand it of other endeavours, and that they would yield it should be put in, but that it must have gone back to be debated in the house of commons, and could not be finished by the time the king was to come on that day.’ But the clause ‘ it is unlawful, under *any pretence whatsoever*, to take arms against the king,’ was more difficult to deal with, the substance of their evasion of it was, that we can conceive of cases in which to obey according to the strict meaning of these words would be suicide, and that no law could be understood to enjoin that. In fact, the law was retained in its severest form, that it might be enforced in that form when expedient—its words left no ground for such exceptions.

BOOK III. Holborn, and in St. Clement's Danes, and that in St. Giles's every street was more or less infected. In the month of June the heat became excessive, and the deaths reported, as from plague, in the last week of that month, were two hundred and seventy-six. On the first of July, it did not appear that more than four such cases had occurred in the city. But towards the middle of that month the disease reached its highest in the whole of the out-parishes westward, and began to make alarming progress among the suburban parishes northward. In the last-mentioned quarter the infection reached its highest in August. With the approach of September, the eastern parishes, reaching from Aldgate to the Minories, and the eight parishes of Southwark, shared the fate of the west and north. The dark cloud having moved thus round the whole circumference of the city, began to shed its disastrous influence over the trembling myriads who still clung to it as their home. During the early part of September, the weekly bills of mortality rose to 12,000—a third part of that number were supposed to have died in one fearful night. The bills for the year report the total number dead of the plague at 68,596, an amount which fails probably by one-third to disclose the real extent of the calamity. It must be remembered, too, that this rate of mortality came on the population of the metropolis when thousands had fled as for their life into all parts of the country. Where the disease prevailed in its strength, there were few houses that were not shut up on account either of the sickness or the absence of their owners; and the cries and sights which filled the streets, by day and by night, were affecting, heart-rending, often horrible.

The mental suffering of the time, as will be supposed,

was great. Often it proved insupportable. Some of the parochial clergy remained faithful to their trust at all hazards. But so many consulted their safety by flight, that one of the devoted few writes, in a letter to Sancroft, 'It is said the bishop of London has sent to those 'pastors who have quitted their flocks by reason of 'these times, that if they return not speedily, others will 'be put into their places.'* In the meanwhile, the ejected and silenced ministers dared to violate the law by ascending the vacant pulpits, and preaching to the people. Multitudes, we are told, hung upon their lips, heard their words, and went home to die. The preachers knew that man had commanded them to be silent, but they were persuaded that God had commanded them to speak, and in such circumstances the divine voice became to them more sure and audible than ever. So state intolerance forced men who had not been disposed to look very closely into such questions, to consider seriously the basis of state legislation in such matters; and so the severity of persecution was to do much towards laying bare the root from which all persecution comes. The enemies of these devoted men said, we are aware that you occupied pulpits which other men had left, but for what purpose? Less to save souls than to preach sedition. The assertion was a calumny, but it had its uses, and the Five Mile Act came as an acknowledgment of their self-sacrificing labours!

We might suppose that such a season would have been the last in which men making any pretension to Christianity would have been disposed to indulge in such exercises of power. But we must repeat, with the fanatic and the bigot inhumanity often becomes a high

* Sancroft *Papers*. Harleian MSS. p. 54.

BOOK III. form of piety. The religion of such men, in place of elevating the natural affections, depraves and perverts them.

Sufferings
of the Non-
conformists.

Bad, too, as the law became, the severities which came from law were light compared with those inflicted in contempt of law. There were men of position and influence scattered through the kingdom who saw these proceedings in their true light, and deplored them. One person of this class said to a Nonconformist minister, they were resolved to ruin you, and they have done it. Another said, the subscription they demand in favour of the Prayer Book is such as should hardly have been demanded in favour of the Bible—it is no marvel that you do not conform. But such men were exceptions.

The influence of Clarendon's administration, and the operation of the Corporation Act, had sufficed to place the magistracy of the kingdom in the hands of intolerant and cruel men. The local officers, of course, received their appointment because they were known to share in the passions of the local authorities. That the public mind might be scared with ideas of conspiracy and treason, soldiers were often called out to suppress religious meetings, or to make the appearance of doing so, and these were generally profane and brutal men, of the sort which had brought so much disgrace on the army of the late king. Many of Cromwell's veterans were still living, but they were not men to descend to such a service.

Prohibited meeting openly by day, it was natural that these injured people should meet covertly by night. When the laws of men contravene the laws of God so manifestly, to evade them is no crime, it becomes a duty, one of the most sacred forms of duty. Through all those times, spies and informers were found everywhere,

many being wretched men who lived by that vocation, and whose lives were a tissue of treacheries and falsehoods; others belonging to the most flagitious classes in their respective neighbourhoods, and who gave vent to their malignant passions, or relieved their poverty, by such means. Most of these men, it was observed, had their reward. Their vices brought the usual penalties. Some of the most notorious among them ended their days upon the gallows. And in events which befell the persecutors who were of a higher grade, the sufferers often saw, or thought they saw, the intervention of a righteous providence. But generally, when Nonconformists were the victims, loyalty was to be shown by a savage insolence, and zeal for order by heedlessness of law.

In the hall of the justice of the peace, even the ladies could sometimes join in the abuse which was heaped upon the poor culprit whose presence at a conventicle had placed him at the mercy of his worship. Nothing was more common than for men to be arrested, and committed to prison, without knowing the cause of such proceedings. To be shut up in jails with ordinary felons was their common experience. Nor was that the worst. The numbers crowded together; the filth, added to confinement in a close atmosphere; and the wretched prison fare, to men little familiar with such privation and suffering, not only impaired health, but often extinguished life. The suffering, too, it must be remembered, came not on men only, but on women and children. It was no rare thing to see the husband and the father rudely torn from his wife and children in the dead of night. In the family of the ejected or silenced minister, life was a hard struggle while the good man was with them; but what was it likely to be when he was thrust into prison,

BOOK III. — and detained there, as was often the case, not for months merely, but for years. And what were the homes which often witnessed such scenes? Homes among strangers. Distant five miles at least from any place where the services of the minister, whether in town or country, had made him friends. How were such men to pay heavy fines? How were they to promise obedience to the injunction—you must not preach? Sentence on them in that form was a sentence to hopeless imprisonment. In fact, the men who brought this system of heartless oppression into existence, intended it should come upon the land as an omnipresent and merciless power, crushing out all religious life among its people not after the type of the piety evinced by Dr. Gilbert Sheldon and Chancellor Clarendon.

The prisons of the kingdom were filled with Nonconformist sufferers. Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Quakers, all shared in the common doom. At intervals, the rod of the evil-doer was suspended, or fell more lightly than at other times; but so long as a Stuart remained upon the throne, its pressure was so far continuous, and so weighty, that the numbers of the injured, and of the injured unto death, become appalling as we look back upon them. Mr. Jeremy White, a Nonconformist minister, made a careful collection of the names of persons who had suffered for their Nonconformity under Charles II. Sixty thousand names are said to have been included in his list, and five thousand are reported as having died from their sufferings. White informed the duke of Dorset that James II. wished to become possessed of this dark calendar, that he might make his use of it in his controversy with the church of England, and offered a thousand guineas as the purchase

money. But the Nonconformist chose to destroy the fruit of his labour rather than see it applied to such a purpose. De Foe, in his preface to De Laune's 'Plea for the Nonconformists,' refers to this fact in terms that must be accepted as evidence of its substantial truthfulness. 'I appeal,' he writes, 'to these reverend and dignified prelates, *some of whom are yet alive*, whether Mr. White, who had carefully collected the list of Dissenters' sufferers and sufferings, did not generously refuse both their invitations and rewards, (those of the popish party at court) and conceal the black record, that it might not rise up in judgment against the reputation of the church of England, and whether they did not send Mr. White their thanks for it, and a reward too, though he had honour enough in him to refuse the money.* De Foe, indeed, makes the number who perished in prisons to be greater than the number reported by White; and estimates the loss of property to the Nonconformists within three years, as the penalty of their conscientiousness, at not less than two millions. We may suppose that in such calculations there must necessarily have been a good deal of conjecture; but if there had not been appearances of a nature to give probability to such representations, they would hardly have been made by such a man.

The reader has seen that, from the conduct of the prelates even in the summer of 1660, it was easy to foresee the course which would be ultimately taken by the government. In that year, and in the following, while the Act of Uniformity was still in the distance, and his majesty's Declaration seemed to guarantee a considerable amount of ecclesiastical liberty, many good

Instances
from the
persecution.

* Edition 1712. Pref. pp. 4, 5.

BOOK III. men were severely and illegally persecuted. Mr. Andrew Parsons, rector of Wem, in Shropshire, was a Presbyterian divine who had hazarded property and life in the cause of the exiled family when Charles came to Worcester, and during the rising under Sir George Booth in Cheshire. But in 1660, he said in a sermon that the preaching in England, in his time, had been better than it had been since the age of the apostles; that more sin had been committed of late, in one month, than had been committed in a year, or in twenty years before; that it is with Satan coming into the soul, as with a king coming into his dominions, he must acquit himself cautiously until he has settled his militia and made himself strong; that where the rulers of the land are wicked, the people do what is right in their own eyes; and inculcating the obligation of oaths, the preacher had said, in passing, 'I must not mention the Covenant.' These sentences were construed as being full of sedition. The rector was seized by troopers, and committed to prison. During six weeks he endeavoured to obtain copies of the depositions against him, but in vain. Throughout his trial he was rudely and unjustly treated; his friends being insulted and hustled out of court. Every point pleaded in his favour was overruled against him. The jury were directed to find a verdict of guilty, and they did so; but it was known afterwards that the foreman was responsible for that decision, and that the majority of the jurymen were against it. After the injured man had suffered three months' imprisonment, a nobleman disposed the king to order his release. But his living, which was a valuable one, was taken from him.*

* *Conformist's Plea for the Nonconformists.* Fourth Plea, 30-35.

Good Oliver Heywood, too, was prosecuted in the consistory court of York for not reading the Book of Common Prayer. This was in the spring of 1662, when no law existed to require such conformity. But this plea, warranted by his majesty's Declaration, was urged in vain. The incumbent was deprived of his living; forbidden as an excommunicated man to attend church; threatened at the same time with fines for not attending; and if not imprisoned, it was because the officer who should have executed the writ connived at his escape.*

These instances are given as samples of what could take place before the Act of Uniformity came into operation, and, revolting as they may be, they are light forms of wrong compared with much which followed, more or less, in all parts of the kingdom.† Such scenes

* *Conformist's Plea for the Nonconformists.* Fourth Plea, 38.

† Baxter, writing in 1663, says, 'and as we were forbidden to preach, so we were vigilantly watched in private, that we might not exhort one another, or pray together. Every meeting for prayer was called a dangerous meeting, or a conventicle at least. One Mr. Beale, in Hatton Garden, having a son brought so low that the physicians thought he would die, desired a few friends, of whom I was one, to meet at his house to pray for him; and because it pleased God to hear our prayers, and that very night to restore him, his mother shortly after falling sick of a fever, we were desired to meet and pray for her recovery. Among those who were to be there, it fell out that Dr. Bates and I failed them. But it was known at Westminster that we were to be there, whereupon two justices of the peace were procured, with the parliament serjeant-at-arms, to apprehend us. They came when part of the company were gone into the room where the gentlewoman lay ready to die, and drew the curtains, but, missing their prey, returned disappointed.' *Life*, 431, 432. If such things could be done by such authorities, and in relation to such persons, what might not be done by less responsible agents, and in relation to meaner victims?

BOOK III. had been familiar to our forefathers through some twenty years, when a Dr. Benjamin Calamy, one of his majesty's chaplains, preached and published a discourse, intitled 'Scrupulous Consciences,' in which Nonconformists were challenged to produce any reasonable vindication of their conduct—disaffection, faction, and self-interest being alleged as the real source of it. Mr. Thomas De Laune, a scholarly layman, proprietor of a grammar school, accepted the challenge thus made, and ventured to give a more reputable account of the motives by which Nonconformists might be supposed to be influenced. The most obnoxious things to be found in De Laune's 'Letter' were, that he had taken exception to a version of the Lord's Prayer in the Prayer Book; that he complained of the frequent repetition of that prayer in the church service; that he declared the forms which required women to speak in the church to be unscriptural; and that he had censured the 'song-prayer' common in cathedrals. On the ground of having thus written, the author was sent as a felon to the Compter jail, and then to Newgate; and was convicted at the Old Bailey of having attempted to bring in sedition and rebellion, by disparaging the Book of Common Prayer, and exposing the king to the hatred and contempt of his subjects! In pursuance of this verdict, De Laune was sent back to Newgate, where his sufferings ended in his death.* It would be easy to fill volumes with instances of this nature.

The Non-conformists' testimony.

Such was the sway of arbitrariness, of lawlessness under the name of law—in fact, the reign of terror, to which English Nonconformists were subject, with slight intermission, through more than quarter of a century

* *Plea for the Nonconformists.* Ed. 1712,

after the Restoration. When the Act of Toleration came under William III. it was found that the party which had braved and endured all these oppressions, not only survived, but survived in undiminished strength. The plea of conscience had not proved to be a shallow whim, or a piece of holiday rhetoric. It had been found to be a rooted principle, a form of the fear of God which no terror from man could subdue. Plunder in all forms, convictions without law, imprisonments without mercy, and death, were the varieties of penalty which had spent their force over a whole kingdom, and through the space of a generation, and had spent it in vain. All honour to the men to whom it was given to bear this testimony in behalf of a religious manliness in an age of conventional profligacy. The protest thus perpetuated—the good confession thus made in defence of the rights of conscience—was not to be wholly lost on the men of those days, still less on the Englishmen of later times. If anything could have educated Nonconformists into a repudiation of state authority on matters of religion, such an experience might have been expected to lead to that result. Even with such schooling many of the pupils were slow to learn. But the tuition was there, and the fruits were to follow.



CHAPTER II.

Progress of Religious Liberty since 1662.

BOOK III.
The Parlia-
ment be-
comes free-
spoken.

THE great constitutional maxims which had been brought into such prominence in our history by the Long Parliament under Charles I. were not to be wholly forgotten. So early as in the session of 1663, the censures passed on the proceedings of the government by the commons were so free, and the determination of the house to retain a strict control over both taxation and expenditure was so marked, that the king adverted in terms of regret to those signs of a falling off from its former alacrity in his service.* But by fair promises, by complying with many of the demands made upon him, and, above all, by professing a willingness to submit the public accounts to the inspection of a committee, his majesty succeeded in obtaining a grant of four subsidies. The session in the early part of 1664, made no further grant of that

* 'This month (May) the greatest news is the height and heat the 'parliament is in, in inquiring into the revenue, which displeaseth the 'court, and their backwardness to give the king any money.'—Pepys, ii. 45, 52, 53, 55, 56. Ralph, i. 189-191. *Parl. Hist.* iv. 251-258.

nature, except in allowing the sovereign to collect what was called the hearth-money, which consisted in a small yearly tax imposed on every chimney.

But in the session of the autumn of that year the call for war against the Dutch had become so vehement, that an annual grant of 800,000*l.* for three years was proposed and carried in support of that object. It was during the history of this war that the commons succeeded in giving stability to their right to appropriate supplies to particular purposes, and to appoint commissioners to audit public accounts. Clarendon was vehement in his resistance of the attempt to revive this ancient privilege. But the party opposed to the chancellor and to his policy was growing stronger every day. The first committee of examination was appointed in 1666. By that time four millions had been voted and raised to carry on the war, and of that sum 2,390,000*l.* had been spent in a manner of which no account could be given. The consequences of this success on the part of the commons, were of the highest importance to the future power of parliament, and to general liberty.*

CHAP. II.

Effect of
this free
spirit in the
Commons.

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 234-238. Pepys, writing on September 23, 1666, says, 'Mr. Wayth and I by water to Whitehall, and there, at Sir W. Cartaret's lodgings, Sir William Coventry met, and we did debate the whole business of our accounts to the parliament. Here happened a pretty question of Sir William Coventry—whether this account of ours will not put my lord treasurer to difficulty to tell what is become of all the money the parliament hath given to this time for the war, which hath amounted to about 4,000,000*l.*, which nobody there could answer.' In an entry of the next month, this functionary says, the monies unaccounted for were 2,390,000*l.*, and that when the opposition party in the commons were demanding the appointment of commissioners to inspect the accounts on oath, 'it made the king and the court mad; the king giving orders to my lord chamberlain to send to the playhouses and b—— houses, to bid all the parliament men that

BOOK III.

Charles and the duke of York were no friends to the Dutch. The traders of the two countries competed with each other in every part of the world. Their mutual complaints of wrong and insult were many and bitter. The effect of this feeling was seen in the energy with which the war was prosecuted. But the victories won by the English in the open sea were avenged by the depredations of the Dutch in the Thames and the Medway. Grown confident by success, in an evil hour, the government decided to save expenditure by laying up all ships of the first and second rate. But in June, 1667, the Dutch admirals, De Witt and De Ruyter, appeared off the Nore with a fleet of seventy sail. In the hope of checking the enemy, a fort was raised at Sheerness, and means were employed to render the Medway impassable. But these precautions were vain. The invaders ascended the river as far as Upnor Castle, destroyed the three first-rates, the Oak, the James, and the London, and captured the Royal Charles. They afterwards made their way up the Thames, almost to Tilbury, and everywhere insulted the coasts and ports of the kingdom at pleasure. The most inconsiderate royalist could not fail to see that the sense of bitter

‘were there to go to the parliament presently; but it was carried ‘against the court by thirty or forty votes.’ Pepys knew that the account which the officials had prepared, bad as it was, would ‘not bear a strict examination.’ The sum of 40,000*l.* had been put down to the queen, which her majesty altered to 4,000*l.* with her own hand. Charles must have known this, and have known that money described as spent by his wife had been placed at the disposal of her rivals. The earl of Southampton offended Lady Castlemaine, and the king hardly less, by refusing to honour the orders of that woman upon the privy pursè for the payment of her bills. *Ibid.* 216, 277, 278, *et alibi.* From this note the reader may judge as to what the government of England was under Charles II.

shame, which was thus sent to the heart of the nation, was to be traced to the conduct of the king and the government, and that both had become thus powerless from the distrust with which they were regarded by the country. Men who had looked with exultation on the corpse of Cromwell as exposed at Tyburn, could now compare the position of England while under his potent and magnanimous guidance, with the low estate to which she had been reduced by her present rulers. The night on which the Dutch burnt the ships in the Thames, his majesty, we are told, 'did sup with my lady Castle-maine, at the duchess of Monmouth's, where all were 'mad upon hunting a poor moth.' The news of the attack on Sheerness was conveyed to the king the next morning in Hyde-park, where our English Sardanapalus had been amusing himself and a favourite dog with duck shooting. Even now, it is said, Charles took 'ten times 'more pains to make friends between lady Castlemaine and Mrs. Stewart, than to save his kingdom.'*

In the train of vice in all forms in the court, of disaster in war, and of plague and fire in the capital, came the fall of Clarendon. The chancellor had done his work. He would have crushed Puritanism, and would have left us the name only of English liberty. But both were to survive him: and the effect of his policy was to make Puritanism a growing power in the land for centuries to come; and to conserve the embers of our ancient freedom in a degree sufficient to ensure the rekindling of the sacred flame. On the accession of the duke of Buckingham to office, the reign of cant was succeeded by the reign of profligacy. But men who govern with little regard to any great interest, and for

* Pepys, iii. 268, 269, 288. *Coke's Detection.*

BOOK III. the sake of power, generally shape their course to the wave which promises to bear them onward. Good measures, accordingly, often come from bad men.

Buckingham affects the liberal.

It was announced in the 'Gazette,' that a new constitution had been given to the cabinet, for the better despatch of business. Some old republicans who had been committed to prison on grounds of questionable legality, were released. Conferences were held, and measures were adopted, to meet the complaints of the Presbyterians and Independents. To the latter it was proposed to grant a toleration; and something, it was hoped, might be done to bring the more moderate men among the former within the pale of the Established Church. At the opening of the next session of parliament, his majesty said, 'For the firmer settlement of peace, at home as well as abroad, one thing more I hold myself obliged to recommend to you, which is, that you should seriously think of some course to beget a better union and composure in the mind of my Protestant subjects in matters of religion, whereby they may be induced, not only to submit quietly to the government, but also faithfully give their assistance to the support of it.'*

1668.
Feb. 8.

The Commons will be intolerant

But the parliament, especially the lower house, while so divided in itself that scarcely any man knew how to trust his neighbour, was found capable of combining against any scheme of king or ministry in favour of the Nonconformists. The debate, however, on this subject extended over several days. We know, also, something of what was said in this discussion. Colonel Sandys 'never knew a toleration without an army to keep all quiet.' Sir S. Littleton replied, that the king of Poland

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 404.

granted the most extensive toleration, yet needed no army, except in time of war. He also ventured to add, that nearly all the disorders in English history since the accession of Elizabeth, had been occasioned by unauthorized impositions on the part of the clergy. Sir Humphrey Winch considered an army and toleration equally dangerous, and would have neither. Mr. Ratcliffe wished to see the Act of Uniformity revised, and the 'assent and consent' reconsidered. Sir Charles Wheeler 'has great kindness to the Presbyterians, as 'they were assistant in their prayers and endeavours to 'the restoration of his majesty. But as for the Independents, they were many of them Anabaptists, Arians, 'Socinians, many of them not Christians.' Sir John Birkenhead exclaimed, 'In Judaism, Paganism, Mahomedanism, and Christianity, in none of these is toleration 'suffered. Must our mother, the church of England, 'bow to a few novices?' Sir Philip Warwick had an equally intelligent method of settling this question. 'If I prove,' said the knight, 'that no man need scruple 'anything in the church of England, why should he be 'further indulged?' Such was the sort of reasoning which disposed a majority of 144 against 78, to vote in favour of a petition praying his majesty 'to 'issue out a proclamation enforcing the laws against 'conventicles.'*

In the spring of 1669 and of 1670, the commons made their votes on money questions, dependent on obtaining the promise that the penal laws in religious matters should be put into more rigorous execution. The majorities who voted on those occasions were, no doubt, unfriendly for the most part to Protestant Non-

Toleration could not be looked at apart from Romanism.

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 404-422.

BOOK III. conformists. But it is proper to state, that the great dread of toleration in the lower house, came from the fact, that if such liberty should be granted at all, it must be granted to the papist in common with the Protestant.

Compara-
tive liberty
of the Non-
conformists.

This activity of the zealots in parliament was accelerated by the fact that the king and his ministers were known to be favourable to a more liberal policy. Through several years after the fall of Clarendon, the laws against the Nonconformists were not enforced as they had been. How it fared with them through that interval of comparative freedom we learn from one of themselves. ‘The ministers of London who had ventured to keep open meeting in their houses, and to preach to great numbers, contrary to law, were, by the king’s favour, connived at, so that the people meet openly to hear them without fear. Some imputed this to the king’s own inclination towards liberty of conscience; some to the power of the duke of Buckingham; some to the influence of the Papists, who were for liberty of conscience for their own interest. Whatever was the secret cause, the great visible cause was the burning of London, and the want of churches for the people to meet in, it being, at the first, too bad to forbid an undone people all public worship with too great rigour. And if they had been so forbidden, poverty had left so little to lose, that they would still have gone on, as in desperation. Therefore, some thought all this was done to make necessity seem a favour. Whatever was the cause of the connivance, it was certain that the country ministers were so much encouraged by the boldness of those in London, that they did the like in most parts of England, and crowds

‘of the most religiously inclined people were their ‘hearers.’ The same writer assures us that this activity of the Nonconformist ministers, and the great neglect of duty on the part of the clergy, greatly impaired the credit of the bishops and of the established church.*

CHAP. III.

It was while affairs were in this posture that the lord keeper, Sir Orlando Bridgman, placed himself in communication with some leading persons among Conformists and Nonconformists, with a view to the adjustment of some scheme which should ensure toleration to the Independents and others, and should admit the more moderate Presbyterians into the state church. Wilkins, bishop of Chester ; Mr. Burton, his lordship’s chaplain ; Stillingfleet, and Tillotson, were brought into this project on the one side ; and Baxter, Owen, and Manton on the other. Nearly all the matters which had come under discussion in the Savoy conference were now reconsidered, and between the men who were parties to these deliberations there would have been little difficulty in coming to a settlement. But the main result of these proceedings was seen in the angry controversy occasioned by them.

Comprehension and toleration scheme attempted.

The rumour of what was doing, was taken up by the intolerant party as being hardly less significant than the

The great storm raised by it.

* Baxter’s *Life*, book iii. 22, *et seq.* ‘Mr. Blackburne told me how ‘high the present clergy carry themselves everywhere, so that they are ‘hated and laughed at by everybody. And I am convinced in my ‘judgment, not only from his discourse, but my thoughts in general, ‘that the present clergy will never heartily go down with the present ‘commons of England—they (the people) have been so used to liberty ‘and freedom, and are so acquainted with the pride and debauchery of ‘the present clergy. He did give me many stories of the affronts which ‘the clergy did receive, in all places of England, from the gentry and ‘ordinary persons of the parish.’—Pepys’ *Diary*, ii. 116, 117.

BOOK III.

detection of the Guy Fawkes conspiracy. Pamphlets denouncing the scheme came forth almost daily. Everything that could be imagined as expedient to be said against toleration or concession was said, and after the most unfair and injurious manner. Men who had clamoured to fill our statute-book with bad enactments, now affected to be amazed at the wickedness of malcontents who could proclaim themselves rebels by violating the law. The Presbyterians could not pray that toleration should be extended to Papists and Socinians, and they were in consequence reviled as inconsistent and presumptuous in seeking that concession in any form should be made to themselves. They were said to have kindled the flame of the late civil war, while their allies, the Independents, sent the king to the block. And were not these a strange sort of people to be expecting favour in any well-ordered state? Passages and scraps were culled from the writings of the Nonconformists, or adopted from reports concerning the prayers or the preachings of the weakest and lowest class of persons among them, and strung artfully together, were held up to the view of the public as presenting a true portraiture of the sort of people who would fain be admitted to state privileges, and even to the rank of clergymen in the English church. Controversy so conducted, was deplored by good men as a wrong done, not so much to a religious party, as to religion itself. The scoffers of the times were the gainers by it.

Sheldon
and his
protégé
Dr. Parker.

Dr. Patrick, a latitudinarian divine, disgraced himself by writing after this manner. But he was far surpassed in disingenuousness and rancour by one of his contemporaries. Archbishop Sheldon had not seen anything in the effects of his ecclesiastical policy to lead him to

abandon it, or even to moderate it. After ten years of persecution, he was as much as ever a persecutor. His disposition to make light of the religious convictions of good men, evinced at the commencement of that interval, continued with him to its close. Years after the Bartholomew-day of 1662, his grace would amuse the dinner guests at his palace, by encouraging a buffoon military officer in mimicking the gait and dialect, the scriptural phraseology and nasal whine, of a Scotch Puritan preacher.* In Dr. Parker, one of his household chaplains, the archbishop found a man after his own heart. Parker was young, and had grown up among separatists, but had become willing to exercise his powers of invective, sarcasm, and abuse in the service of his patron. Sheldon watched the proceedings of bishop Wilkins and his coadjutors, and was assiduous in counteracting them. But Parker, who was in the confidence of the primate, and knew what would please him, did not restrict himself to private influence. He published a work intitled 'A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie,' in which all that a pen of fluency and bitterness, and utterly unscrupulous, could do to make the Nonconformists odious, was done.† But the authority he would have vested in the magistrate in regard to religion was so extravagant, and the reasoning which he opposed to toleration was of so worthless a description, that refutation on those points seemed to be superfluous.

It was proper, however, that his slanders should not

* Pepys, iv. 321, 322.

† 'A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie, wherein the authority of the civil magistrate over the consciences of delegates in matters of external religion is asserted; the mischiefs and inconveniences of toleration are represented; and all pretences pleaded in behalf of liberty of conscience are fully answered.' 8vo, pp. 326. 1670.

BOOK III.

Answered
by Dr.
Owen.

be left without a contradiction, and that the censure of his bad morals should be coupled with some exposure of his bad logic. Baxter was urged to furnish a reply; but he declined, assigning a reason which certainly was not a good one. Dr. Owen supplied his lack of service, and did so in a manner which raised him highly in the esteem of his brethren. After the lapse of twelve-months Parker sent forth a reply, and a year later a second. But the chief effect of these performances was to show that the primate's chaplain felt himself wounded, and to bring a still more formidable antagonist into the field.*

Chastised
by Andrew
Marvel.

When Owen had discharged his heavy artillery, Andrew Marvel came with his lighter implements of destruction. The style of Parker was so flaunty, vain, and self-confident, that Marvel felt prompted to deal with it in a satirical fashion, and the whole manner of the complaisant divine as exhibited by him became to the last degree ridiculous. His Puritan assailant follows him from preface to treatise, from chapter to chapter, and from page to page, subjecting him at every step to the most merciless dissection and exposure, everywhere

* According to Parker, Dr. Owen's only magazine was the 'dung-hill,' his only weapon was 'calumny.' So venomous was he that 'he must spit his poison or burst.' Had this 'great bell-weather of sedition' been treated worse than was alleged, 'it could never be pretended that he was treated worse than he deserved; for he was a person of so pernicious a temper, of so much insolence, of such a restless, implacable spirit, of such a sworn and inveterate hatred to the government of the church and state, that he ought, without ceremony or fear of incivility, to have been pursued as the great pest and most dangerous enemy of the church and commonwealth; and whosoever wishes well to his country can never do it greater service than by beating down the interest and reputation of such sons of Belial.' Such, it seems, was the style of authorship which found favour at Lambeth during the primacy of Archbishop Sheldon.

finding the same man—a man to be laughed at. This publication no sooner made its appearance, than talk everywhere arose about it. It passed at once into the hands of all educated men. Courtiers and citizens, and the king himself, enjoyed the merriment thus furnished to them exceedingly. One anonymous person concluded a letter to the author saying, ‘If thou darest to print or publish any lie or libel against Dr. Parker, by the Eternal God I will cut thy throat.’ But this menace did not dismay the offender. A second part to the work already published was sent forth, and added to the execution done by the first. Parker left memoirs behind him, in which he gave evidence that the wound thus inflicted was never healed, and did all that he could do to avenge himself on his old antagonist. But while his memoirs and his polemics are alike forgotten, the chastisement he so justly merited lives in the pages of Andrew Marvel, and will live there as long as our literature.*

But the intolerant majority in the commons was not to be materially diminished by any measure of success on the part of liberal disputants from the press. Two years before Andrew Marvel took up his pen in this controversy, parliament had revised the Conventicle Act, making its provisions more than ever stringent. Every person allowing a conventicle meeting in his house was to be liable to a fine of 20*l.* Every preacher was to be liable to a fine of 20*l.* for a first offence, and to a fine

The Parliament is still intolerant. Revives the Conventicle Act.

* Parker's *Memoirs of his Own Times*. Marvel's *Works*, vol. ii. ed. 1776. Owen's *Truth and Innocence Vindicated*. Baxter's *Life*, book iii. Burnet's *Own Times*, *ubi supra*. Many pieces appeared against the first part of the rehearsal, but the author kept the field against all comers, and was left to do so.

BOOK III. of 40*l.* for a second. If persons convicted were not able to pay their fines, persons convicted with them were made liable in their stead. One-third of the sums exacted passed to the informer or informers; and, contrary to the humane spirit characteristic of our law, all clauses of the act were to 'be construed most largely and beneficially for the suppression of conventicles, and for the justification and encouragement of all persons to be employed in the execution thereof.' So the most infamous informers, and the most intolerant magistrates, might reckon upon a friend in the government, whatever might be their evil deeds. It should be added, that the magistrate convicted of negligence in regard to the enforcement of this statute was liable to a fine of 100*l.* The oppressions contemplated in this law were such as to demonstrate anew that bigotry is always one of the worst forms of inhumanity.* All the bishops voted in favour of this measure, with the exception of Wilkins, bishop of Chester, and Rainbow, bishop of Carlisle.

License given to the intolerants. Trial of Penn and Mead.

This act was passed in March, 1670, and for a while the men disposed to persecute the Nonconformists were left by the government to take their own course, in the hope, it is said, that the discontent raised might compel the parliament to assent to a general toleration. It was at this juncture that considerable excitement was produced by the trial of two Quakers—Penn and Mead. That class of Christians had become much more reasonable in their conduct than in the earlier stages of their history, but were as resolved as ever that no law of man should prevent their assembling publicly to worship God. In

* *Documents Relating to the Settlement of the Church of England*, 491-499.

pursuance of this determination they evinced a degree of courage, and a power of endurance, which called forth much admiration. On a given day, a number of them met in Gracechurch-street, intending to worship in a building set apart there for that purpose. But they found the doors fastened, and guarded by soldiers. Denied access to their meeting-house, Penn addressed the people in the street, and Penn and Mead were apprehended on the charge of being engaged in riot and tumult. On their trial they took exception to the legality of the proceedings, insisted that there was nothing of the nature of riot or tumult in their conduct, and urged upon the conscience of the jury the duty of acquitting themselves as true guardians of English liberty.

Nothing could be worse than the conduct of the recorder, the mayor, and other officials in the court. The men at the bar were checked, rebuked, browbeaten, and threatened in every possible way. But they continued self-possessed, and defended themselves with singular ability. The jury returned a verdict against Penn as guilty of speaking to the people in Gracechurch-street, but the words, 'riotous, tumultuous, or unlawful,' were not allowed to have any place in their decision. The invective of the court was now turned from the prisoners to the jurymen. They were insulted and menaced, but they remained unmoved. Twice they were closeted on Saturday, and the foreman only repeated what he had said before. Confined all night, and with much harshness, they were called into court on Sunday morning. Still their answer was the same. Torrents of abuse were directed against them, but to no purpose. Detained prisoners until Monday, the foreman then said what he had said on Sunday and on Saturday. Closeted the fifth time, and

BOOK III.

commanded to say 'Guilty' or 'Not guilty,' the answer of the foreman was 'Not guilty.' But this was not the end. Penn and Mead were sent to Newgate under the new charge of contempt, because they had come into court with their hats on. The jury were sent to the same place, until each man should pay a fine of forty marks!*

Charles
issues his
Declaration
of Indul-
gence.

Such were the things that could be done in England in 1670; and similar outrages in the name of law were perpetrated through the kingdom during that year and the next. But in April, 1671, Charles prorogued the parliament, and during more than two years dispensed with its services. In such intervals the king was a comparatively free man. In March, 1672, his majesty issued his Declaration of Indulgence, which proclaimed the suspension of 'all manner of penal laws in matters ecclesiastical against whatsoever sect of Nonconformists or recusants.' The king hoped by this means to diminish the growing discontent, and to prepare the way for that general toleration, with the sanction of parliament, which he had so long desired. Twelve years of experience, said the sovereign, has shown the inefficacy of coercion where the religious conscience is concerned.

Nonconfor-
mists avail
themselves
of it.

Great was the excitement raised by these proceedings. It may be true, that the theory of the English constitution knew nothing of the dispensing power as thus exercised. But it is no less certain that the theory of the constitution in this respect, and the practice of the government, had never been in harmony. The laws against the Puritans under Elizabeth, and the laws against the Romanists from that time down to this period, had been enforced but irregularly and partially. Though often protested against, it was well known that the crown never

* *State Trials*, vi. 951-1036. Sewell, ii. 259-271.

ceased to exercise a power of this nature more or less. No such discretion is left to the crown now, either by law or usage. But this fact is one of those characterizing the maturity of our constitutional system, as distinguished from its immaturity. Even in that day, however, there were Nonconformists who saw that such action on the part of the crown, if in favour of right and humanity to-day, might be in favour of wrong and cruelty to-morrow, and who, accordingly, dared not seek any shelter under the protection thus proffered them. But the great majority of Dissenters were not much influenced by such scruples. Through more than eleven years this parliament had perpetuated itself; through all that time its course had been so perfidious, oppressive, and pitiless, that to have taken right from it by force would have been a perfectly right thing to do, had it been practicable. In such circumstances, it is no marvel that men should have been found willing to accept right as thus presented to them by the sovereign.

The London ministers presented an address to his majesty. It was drawn up by Dr. Owen. It simply expressed their sense of gratitude for the justice and humanity shown towards a large class of his suffering and loyal subjects; affirming that they coveted nothing beyond the enjoyment of that natural right which ought to be secured to them by law; and concluded with a prayer that his majesty might continue in his present counsels, which had already 'restored quietness to neighbours, peace to counties, emptied prisons, and filled houses with industrious workers, and engaged the hands of multitudes into the resolved and endeavoured readiness for his majesty's service.'*

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxxi. 253. Orme's *Owen*, 257, 258.

BOOK III.

Three thousand places become licensed for public worship.

From manuscripts existing in the Privy Council Office, we learn that more than three thousand applications were promptly made from different parts of the kingdom for licences to erect or use edifices for public worship. When it is remembered that there were Nonconformists who scrupled to make any such application, these numbers will be felt as warranting the conclusion, that after twelve years of relentless persecution, the conscientiousness and piety of the land must have been found largely among the dissenters. It was at this juncture that the Presbyterians and Independents instituted the weekly lecture at Pinners' Hall, which did not come to an end before 1695.

Attack and reply.

The enemies of the Nonconformists taunted them with inconsistency. Old parliamentarians, was the cry, taking refuge under a stretch of prerogative! But the retort was not difficult. Old cavaliers, was the answer, making light of royalty, and descending to oppose the bigotry of a parliament to the humanity of a king! We admit, said the dissenters, that the scale has turned, but more in appearance than in reality. We have always taken sides with right and liberty, and have left it to others to take sides for the opposite reasons.

Parliament condemns the Indulgence, but will favour the Dissenters.

But it is now known, that at this time Charles was in secret negotiation with Louis XIV., and had sold his services to that monarch. Suspicion concerning intrigues of this nature, and concerning an intention by this means to introduce popery and arbitrary power, was taking strong possession of the mind both of parliament and people. Early in 1673, it was seen as inevitable that the two houses should be once more summoned. On their meeting, the Declaration of Indulgence, issued twelve months before, came immediately under discussion. It

was censured generally and vehemently. By this time, also, the Nonconformists began to share in the general distrust as to the designs of the government. It was observable, moreover, in the present debates, that now, for the first time in the history of this parliament, a distinction was admitted between the Catholic and Protestant Nonconformists. It was stated by a large proportion of the members, that they had no wish to deprive dissenters of the liberty which his majesty's Declaration had conferred upon them; but they demurred to its being granted by an exercise of the prerogative. It was carried by a majority of 168 against 116, that, while the king might pardon individual offenders, no suspension of a statute could take place without the authority of parliament. Charles endeavoured to vindicate his right to do as he had done. The commons replied in still stronger language. Such a usage, they said, would vest a legislative power in the sovereign alone, and was opposed to the spirit and letter of the constitution. His majesty appealed to the lords, who would probably have supported his pretensions in great part, if not entirely. But, with the unsteadiness always sooner or later betrayed by him when pressed with difficulty, he at length consented that the Declaration should be withdrawn.*

The Nonconformists, being assured by the men who to this time had been their relentless persecutors, that the liberty promised them by the king should be secured to them by statute, were surprised and delighted by this change of policy, and had abstained from taking any part in the severe struggle between the court and the commons on this question. 'This prudent behaviour of theirs,' says Burnet, 'did so soften the church party, that there

The Commons deceive the Nonconformists.

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 515-561. Dalrymple, ii. 89, 90.

BOOK III. 'were no more votes or bills against them, even in that 'angry parliament, which had formerly been so severe 'upon them.'* By the government, the charge of aiming to introduce popery and arbitrary power was of course denounced as ill-founded and malicious. But its opponents appealed in support of their opinion to the aspect of the war with Holland; to the character of many of the persons entrusted with responsible offices in that enterprise; to the known or suspected prepossessions of several members of the cabinet, and even to those of the duke of York himself. In fact, the general alarm on this subject was neither feigned nor unnatural. The late duchess of York was known to have died a Catholic. The duke, the heir-presumptive to the throne, was suspected of having embraced that faith, and *had* embraced it some five years since. More than one member of the cabinet was of the same creed. The inclination of the king himself was a mystery. The present war, too, was a war of alliance with Romanism against Protestantism. Great was the effort made, accordingly, to induce the Nonconformists to join the great Protestant party in placing some stronger safeguard around the reformed faith.

The Test Act.

The result was the introduction of the well-known Test Act, which declared that every person refusing to take the oath of allegiance and supremacy, and to receive the sacrament after the form of the church of England, should be held incapable of any public employment, civil or military. It was further required, that no person should hold any such office without repudiating the doctrine of transubstantiation. It may seem strange that the king should have given his assent to such a law;

* *Own Times*, ii. 6, 7.

but his majesty was necessitous, and there were few measures in which he might not be brought to acquiesce by a money inducement. The parliament knew its power in this form, and had never failed to make a politic use of it.

With regard to the Protestant Nonconformists, they had often been deceived by the court; they were now to be deceived by the opposition. They had favoured the passing of this act, with the distinct understanding that a relief bill would be introduced to exempt them from its operation. Such a bill was introduced, discussed, and various amendments were made upon it, some by the lords, and some by the commons. But a number of little difficulties were allowed to impede its progress until the approach of Easter. The season then called for an adjournment, and that adjournment was followed by a prorogation—a form by which all unfinished proceedings on bills were made void. The Nonconformists had a right to complain both of treachery and ingratitude. But no juncture came in which it could be deemed prudent to revive the question.* So from 1673 to 1828, a law excluding Protestant Dissenters from all civil or military offices, except on the condition of occasional conformity, remained on our statute book. Down to that year, 1828, men were found who could plead in favour of this desecration of a religious ordinance, as forming one of the grand bulwarks of the established church, very much as men of the same order are pleading now in behalf of blunders from the bygone which the present has outgrown.

The Non-conformists defrauded of their Relief Bill.

The next event in our history bearing on the progress of religious liberty, was the grand debate in 1675 on the

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 559-577. Burnet, ii. 6, 7. Neal, iv. 418-423.

BOOK III.

Grand
debate of
1675, on
the Non-
resisting
Test.

non-resisting test then introduced by the government, This bill required every member of parliament to declare on oath his acceptance of the doctrine of passive obedience, and to bind himself, in the same solemn manner, not to attempt to bring about any change in the constitution in church or state. The intention of this measure was to preclude Nonconformists from all place in the legislature, and with them, all persons whose ideas concerning the liberty of the subject might dispose them to give trouble to the court or the government. Danby, the prime minister, and his colleagues, entered fully into this policy. The bill was introduced in the upper house. According to the language of the ministers of the crown, it proposed nothing more than a moderate security for the church and the monarchy. But the opposition peers described it as menacing their most valued rights and liberties. If persisted in, its supporters should be prepared to listen to speeches much more unacceptable to them than had been heard for some while past within the walls of parliament.

It will be remembered that the parliament had not scrupled to apply this test very rigidly elsewhere. It had made its appearance in the Corporation Act, in the Act of Uniformity, and in some other connexions. But it was now to come home to themselves, and this, too, when fifteen years since the Restoration had contributed to induce a more discreet manner of looking at such questions. It was urged by the prelates and the ministers that the bill should be discussed in a committee of the whole house. On this motion an animated debate ensued, which lasted five days. The decision was in favour of the government. But two protests were entered against it—one against the substance of the bill, as a meditated

infringement on the rights of the peerage, which received twenty-four signatures, and another against the vote which allowed the bill to go into committee. The twelve peers who signed the latter protest said, ‘ The bill doth not only subvert the privilege and birthright of the peers, by imposing an oath upon them, with penalty of losing their seats in parliament, but also, as we conceive, strikes at the very root of government, it being necessary to all governments to have freedom of votes and debates in those who have the power to alter and make laws; and besides the express words of the bill, obliging every man to abjure all endeavour to alter the government of the church, without regard to anything that rules of prudence in the government, or Christian compassion towards dissenters, or the necessity of affairs at any time, shall or may require. On these considerations we consider it of dangerous consequence to have any bill of this nature so much as committed.’

Well spoken. What a pity such maxims should have been so long placed in abeyance. Great, however, was the offence given to the bishops and the court lords by that part of the protest which spoke of the compassion due to Dissenters. Some would have sent the protesting peers to the Tower; but the majority deemed it prudent to limit their proceedings to a resolution which declared the reasons of the obnoxious protest to be ‘ a reflection on the honour of the house, and of dangerous tendency.’ In the course of the proceeding the provisions of the bill were divided into two departments, consisting of a declaration and an oath. The declaration consisted of a renunciation of all right to take up arms against the king, or those commissioned by him, under any pretence whatsoever. The oath was

BOOK III. directed against all attempts to alter the constitution in church or state. In defence of the declaration, the government insisted that all the disorders between 1640 and 1660 came from a neglect of the principle there enunciated. The opposition maintained that the principle of the bill, if carried out, must be fatal to government, and to the true end of society. Concerning the matters comprehended in the oath, the opposition lords affirmed that the established church is dependent in all things on the civil power, and liable to any change which the king and parliament should account it expedient to introduce. On the contrary, said the bishops, our priesthood, and our exclusive power of ordination, have come to us immediately from Christ. Licence to exercise our ministry in any particular country must come from the magistracy of that country, but nothing more. In reply, it was argued, that this *jus divinum* pretension was inconsistent with the ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown, and, if once ceded, might justify a prelate in placing his prince under the ban of excommunication. In that view, the church would not be so much the servant of the state as its superior. So in regard to civil matters, it was affirmed that all schemes of government consist of so much recognized law; and what could be more absurd than to attempt to bind a legislature never to attempt the improvement of its own work? What can be the vocation of the law-maker, if not to enact, rescind, or modify law?

This memorable debate lasted seventeen days, extending often to a late hour in the evening, sometimes to midnight. Everything characteristic of the English constitution, and of English law, came under discussion. Charles made his appearance in the house as a listener,

standing, or seating himself, near the fireside, day after day. But his presence imposed no restraint. Principles of civil and religious freedom, familiar to the ears of Englishmen in the days of the Long Parliament and of the Commonwealth, and which had seemed to be so long buried, now came to the surface again with every sign of life. The protest of Puritans and Parliamentarians had not been in vain. Nor had the demand of homage to the individual conscience in matters of religion, so steadily made by Nonconformists, been made in vain. The bill passed the committee; but it was never reported to the house. We may regret that it did not reach the commons. The resistance to it there would have been still more significant.*

CHAP. II.

The great facts of an ecclesiastical character during the remainder of this reign are presented in the history of the popish plot, and in the effort made by parliament to exclude the duke of York from the throne on the ground of his being a Catholic. The popish plot led to the passing of the Catholic Exclusion Bill, a law carried in a moment of frenzy, and not to be rescinded but by the slow progress of national intelligence during the next century and a half. The Catholic had to wait long for his relief bill, as the Protestant Nonconformist had to wait long for the repeal of the test act. So passing circumstances, or the passions of an hour, may extend their influence to remote generations. With regard to the second fact—the exclusion question—measures concerning the succession were in agitation as early as 1670, and the controversy on that subject grew to be more

The Popish
Plot and the
Catholic
Exclusion
Act.

* Lords' Journals, xii. 665-682. *Parl. Hist.* iv. 714-721. Ap. 5. Marvel's *Works*, i. 510, *et seq.* Burnet, ii. 73-78. North's *Examen.* 61-64.

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The Suc-
cession and
the Exclu-
sion Bill.

and more formidable, until it reached its culminating point in the history of the Oxford parliament in 1681.

Nearly all men were agreed, that in the event of a Catholic coming to the throne, it would be of the greatest moment that material restrictions should be laid on the patronage and power of the crown. Hence the point to be made clear by those who would have excluded the duke from the sovereignty was, that less injury would be done to the crown by transmitting it entire in a somewhat indirect line, than by transmitting it shorn of much of its splendour to the immediate heir. Of course, argument in that form supposed a right in the nation to change the succession for sufficient reasons. To suppose the contrary, it was said, would be to suppose circumstances in which it would become the duty of society to submit to the destruction of its most vital interests in deference to a single will. It was remembered what authority of this nature had been given to Henry VIII. by the English parliament. In the present case, the word 'popery' was synonymous with everything jesuitical and malignant—everything most at variance with the religion and liberty of England. It was feared, and with good reason, that James would not scruple to use all his power as king in favour of so disastrous a revolution. But sound as these conceptions might be, the court lawyers, the clergy, the old cavalier party through the kingdom, and a large portion of the people under the influence of those classes, were slow to receive such ideas. By these parties, it was accounted unfeeling, harsh, and even cruel, to expect that the king should be the man to deal thus with royalty in the person of his own brother. Hence the great country or liberal party, which during many years had taken the people largely

along with them, found themselves exposed to an unexpected measure of opposition on this question. In the parliament at Oxford, the lords rejected the exclusion bill by a majority of two to one. Charles would consent to much, but he would not consent to such a measure. So the commons would bear much; but they would grant no supply without that bill. The end was a prorogation of the parliament, which was followed by a dissolution. Some would have declared Monmouth successor to the throne. But the wiser class of politicians looked to the son-in-law of the duke, William, Prince of Orange.

In 1680, great was the change that had come over the mind of England since 1660. The established church is still venerated, and popery is still named with execration. But in other respects scarcely a trace of the past remains in the popular feeling. In regard to civil liberty, the spirit of the lower house had come to be that of the parliaments led by Coke and Eliot—or of the Long Parliament, when engaged in its memorable debate on the Grand Remonstrance. Charles I. placed the securities of freedom provided by the constitution, even the use of parliaments, in protracted abeyance; and the voice of the nation in 1642 claimed that the king should govern by means of parliaments, and according to law, and not otherwise. In 1680, we see in Charles II. a king who had sold himself to France, rather than submit to the restraints imposed by the law of his dominions; and against this course the long parliament of his reign, and the shorter parliaments which followed, all raised their protest, and did so in such terms as to have brought the nation apparently to the verge of a civil war. The growth of the country party in this

Revolution
in public
feeling since
1660.

BOOK III. reign is the growth of a party imbibing the spirit, and iterating the maxims, of the parliamentary leaders of forty years before; and the court resistance is still a resistance in favour of an arbitrary in preference to a constitutional government, and in favour of a religious system receding towards Rome in place of advancing towards a greater purity. In this later time also, the growth of the popular power leads to some excesses; these excesses produce reaction; and in the course of this reaction some noble natures are to perish, and many great interests are to be endangered. The names of Russell and Sidney bring up dark phases in our annals. But the darkness is to become light. The Stuart will be true to his hereditary instincts to the last. The English people, too, on the whole, will be true to their better nature, and their historical traditions.

James II.—
persecution
of Noncon-
formists.

All that the country party had predicted as likely to be attempted by James, should he ascend the throne, was attempted by him to the letter. He at once took the place of his brother as pensioner to the king of France, partly for the sake of the money, and partly in the hope of obtaining other kinds of assistance from that quarter. The brutal conduct of judge Jeffreys towards the venerable Richard Baxter, only three weeks after the king's accession, was sufficient evidence that his majesty's release of persons in prison on religious grounds, on that occasion, was not to be accepted as any sign of a disposition to deal generously with Protestant Nonconformists.

The New
Parliament.

The late seizure of the corporation charters, and the use made of the Rye-house conspiracy, had placed the elections so much in the hands of the government, that even the king professed himself satisfied with the returns made to his first parliament. In fact, there is too much reason to conclude, that could James have been satisfied

with the religion of the church of England, he might have done much, by means of that assembly, towards bringing back the days of Laud and Strafford.

CHAP. II.

The Nonconformists saw this tendency in public affairs very clearly, and when the duke of Monmouth landed in the west, they formed the bulk of his followers. The western counties were to England in those days, what Lancashire and Yorkshire have become since; and Puritanism and Nonconformity in this country have always been strong, where our manufacturing and productive industry has been strong. We are all familiar with the painful issue of the Monmouth rebellion. We never forget the judicial atrocities which followed. But failure even in that enterprise, and in the rising under Argyle in Scotland, was to be failure only in part. The confidence of the king was so raised by those successes, as to lead him to resolve on those extreme measures which were to end so memorably.

Monmouth rebellion.

James now doubled the military force at his disposal on his accession; and not only ventured to suspend the test laws in favour of some of his Catholic friends, but informed parliament that he should continue to exercise that power, in such cases as should seem to him expedient. But in the view of his best friends, the militia, a force consisting of men who did not cease to be yeomen and citizens, were the legitimate and the best safeguard to the country. The meaning of a standing army, it was said, is arbitrary power; and the surrender of the test laws would be the fall of the church of England. So an end came to harmony between the king and his parliament. The two houses were prorogued, and with manifest displeasure.*

The King will suspend the Test laws.

* *Parl. Hist.* iv. 1367-1387. Burnet, ii. 88-94. Reresby's *Memoirs*, 214-221. Ralph, i. 902-909. Fox, *Hist.* Ap. cxxxiv.

BOOK III.

The King calls forth resistance from the Church, and courts the Non-conformists.

Attempts were now made to revive the High commission Court, and to banish all controversy from the pulpits of the established church on the points at issue between Catholics and Protestants.* In the meanwhile, every sort of inducement was known to be placed in requisition, both in court and country, to make converts to Romanism. His majesty had obtained a decision from the judges in favour of his dispensing power; but even in those days, it had been necessary to pack the bench to secure such a judgment. † The uses made of the power supposed to be thus obtained called forth the resistance so honourable to the governors of the Charterhouse, and the authorities in both universities. Checked at nearly all points by churchmen, on whose passive-obedience pledges he had too much relied, his majesty turned to the Nonconformists, denounced the persecutions which had disgraced the history of the Anglican church, and assured those who had suffered so much from her hands that his own course towards them should be very different. ‡ Hence came his majesty's Declaration in favour of liberty of conscience.

Declaration for liberty of conscience.

The preamble to that document set forth the most weighty arguments in defence of religious toleration. Nothing was wanting, but that there should have been some ground to regard the appeal to such enlightened sentiments as sincere, and that what was thus done by the crown should have been done by the legislature.

* Ralph, i. 929-931. Welwood's *Memoirs*, 202, 203. Burnet, iii. 106-112.

† Mackintosh, *Hist.* 56-64. Burnet, 97-100. Reresby, 232, 233. Ralph, i. 918-920.

‡ It was at this juncture that James wished to become possessed of Mr. Jeremy White's record of Nonconformist suffering. See p. 415.

The crown is the fountain both of honour and of mercy. CHAP. II.
But while the ordinary exercise of the dispensing power was said to have rested on the known circumstances of each case, and not to have operated in favour of an alleged offender until after process and conviction, when it simply saved him from the penalty incurred, the power now exercised suspended the laws themselves, affecting as they did large classes of the community, and precluding all penalty or suit. It was, beyond doubt, the crown accroaching to itself the legislative power of the constitution.

This course of events placed Protestant Nonconformists in considerable difficulty. It could be no secret, that the intention of the king was not to favour Protestant dissenters, but to advance his own faith. Nor was it to be doubted that his majesty would be little scrupulous concerning the means by which that end might be accomplished. On the other hand, the Anglican church, now in danger, and now disposed to court alliance with the Nonconformists, had little claim on the gratitude of that class of persons. The prelates and the parliaments of England had pursued such a course towards them since 1660 as might well have left them without any great reverence for either. The history of prelacy through that interval had been to them the history of perpetuated wrong and cruelty; and every Stuart parliament which had denied them toleration, they might reasonably have denounced as perfidious and unjust. In resuming public worship on the ground of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, they invaded no man's right, they simply exercised their own. The two houses might censure that proceeding; but who was to blame—the parliament who would not cede the right,

Conduct of
the Non-
conformists.

BOOK III. or the king who would? The commons had used its money power to play the tyrant, and the king used his prerogative to play the liberal, and in respect to religious worship the Nonconformists had to choose between the two masters. If rulers will persist in opposing what they account justice in the form of law, to the strong natural sense of justice elsewhere, they must abide the consequences. In such struggles society will right itself, and many an unnatural combination will be submitted to, that something still more unnatural may be vanquished. So in 1687, his majesty gave a portion of his subjects liberty to do what it was right and well to do, and it would have been strange if they had not resolved in the circumstances of the case to avail themselves of that liberty.

We should, however, have been surprised if any considerable number of Nonconformists had done anything that might seem to commit them to the general policy of the government. Great effort was made to induce persons to send addresses of thanks to the king. In the course of the next ten months one hundred and eighty such documents were received. Of that number, seventy-five were from corporations and grand juries, seven came from bishops and their clergy, fourteen from the inhabitants of places, leaving less than eighty as the number sent up by the Nonconformists. And when it is remembered that the licensed places for Nonconformist worship in 1672 were above three thousand, the fact that so small a number of congregations could be led to return thanks in any form for what had been done, may be taken as evidence that Dissenters acted at that critical juncture with much of the caution to have been expected from them, as men sincerely attached to

the Protestant religion and to English liberty. If there was fault in sending such addresses at all, it is clear that more than half of them came from churchmen, not from Nonconformists.*

CHAP. II

The Declaration of Indulgence issued in 1688 was more formal and comprehensive than that of 1687. It not only guaranteed freedom of worship, it put an end to all tests as a qualification for civil office. The clergy were required to read this paper from the pulpit, as an act of obedience to their sovereign. From their often avowed doctrine concerning obedience, James had a right to expect submission. But the bishops dared to be inconsistent—nobly inconsistent. Their lordships ventured to state the reasons of their hesitancy. Their petition was pronounced a seditious libel, and they were sent to the Tower. So James sealed the fate of himself and his dynasty. All hearts seemed to be with the bishops. ‘The whole church,’ says D’Adda, the papal nuncio, ‘espouses the cause of the bishops. There is no reasonable expectation of a division among the Anglicans, and *our hopes for the Nonconformists are vanished.*’ Among those who visited the prelates in the Tower with expressions of sympathy and admiration, were ten dissenting ministers. It was well known that the Nonconformists contributed largely to swell the tide of Protestant feeling. The acquittal of the bishops opened the way for William and Mary.

The second Declaration of Indulgence.

William is said to have ascended the English throne hoping to accomplish three ecclesiastical changes—a relaxation of the terms of conformity, the removal of religious tests, and the passing of a Toleration Bill. The first he might have realized had he become king of

William and Mary—
The Act of Toleration

* Burnet, iii. 189, 190. Mackintosh, *Hist.* 174-176.

BOOK III. England in 1660. To have brought about the second he would need to have lived within our own memory. But the last good work he was permitted to achieve, and within a few months after his accession. Even that measure, indeed, was hardly such as its name seems to import. It did not affect to repeal the series of bad laws against Nonconformists from the early years of Elizabeth downwards. Such a process of demolition, to some of the ancient bigots of that day, would have been as affecting as the slaughter of the Innocents. This bill simply prescribed certain conditions, conformity to which should suffice to exempt the persons contemplated from the penalties of those enactments. The layman, taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and repudiating the doctrine of transubstantiation, might claim such exemption. The minister was to assent to something more. He was to profess his belief in the Thirty-nine Articles, with the exception of the thirty-fourth, concerning the traditions of the church; the thirty-fifth, which approves the Book of Homilies; the thirty-sixth, which relates to the consecration of bishops or ministers; and so much of the twentieth as declares that the church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith. Provision was made to exempt the Baptist from inconvenience on account of his peculiar opinions; and the Quaker, who could not take an oath, was allowed the immunity conferred by the Act on making confession of a Christian belief, rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, and promising fidelity to the government.

This bill, it will be seen, was not based on any large avowal of abstract principles. It aimed to meet existing exigencies. So far as Protestant dissenters were con-

cerned, the number who could not avail themselves of it was really so small that we cannot estimate it, while we know that with the hundreds of thousands of Non-conformists over the kingdom it accomplished its purpose. Whatever may be said as to the legislative capacity of the authors of this enactment, it may be truly said, 'that they removed a vast mass of evil without shocking a vast mass of prejudice; that they put an end, at once and for ever, without one division in either house of parliament, without one riot in the streets, with scarcely one audible murmur, even from the classes most deeply tainted with bigotry, to a persecution which had raged during four generations, which had broken innumerable hearts, which had made innumerable firesides desolate, which had filled the prisons with men of whom the world was not worthy, which had driven thousands of those honest, diligent, and God-fearing yeomen and artisans, who are the true strength of a nation, to seek a refuge beyond the ocean, among the wigwams of red Indians and the lairs of panthers.*' It was even so. And let it be remembered that the principles which came to the surface in our history after this manner in 1689, and which were to hold their place more and more definitely and largely in our statute book down to 1862, owe their *origin* among us to those same 'honest, diligent, and God-fearing yeomen and artisans.' To them it was given, as by a divine intuition, to see their truth and greatness, to cling to them, and to suffer for them, in the hope that the sons, if not the sires, might live to see the day when right should be done towards them. The travel of those potent influences in our English land, was not from the surface downwards, but

* Macaulay's *England*, iii. 87.

BOOK III. from the base upwards. The spirit of our free life has come to us, not so much from palaces or senates, as from prison cells, or from places where the priest lights the faggot, or the hangman does his office. It has pleased God that our Christian liberty should come to us as our Christian faith has come to us, from among 'things which are despised—yea, and things which are 'not, to bring to nought things that are.' *

* 1 Ep. Cor. i. 28.



CHAPTER III.

The Progress of Religious Life since 1662.



HERE *must* be a scheme of comprehension. To restrict the established church to the old Episcopalian sect, to the exclusion of all other sects, would be to extrude from her pulpits nearly all the efficient preachers in them, and to doom the land to spiritual barrenness. So said many of the men who represented English Puritanism in 1660. And the men who were resolved on dispensing with the services of such preachers took great umbrage at this language. It was the language of ignorance, vanity, of enormous self-conceit. But we, who look at the question from a distance, and see it as experiment and history have presented it to us, may be disposed to regard such views as being precisely of the kind which modest, devout, and well-informed men might have been expected to entertain.

Nonconformists are by no means insensible to the claims of the distinguished men whose names are conspicuous in the history of the Anglican church after the Restoration. To the learning of not a few among them,

CHAP. III.

Ejectment
supposed
impossible
—and why.

Religion
left in the
Established
Church
after 1662.

BOOK III. every educated and impartial man must be prepared to do a most willing homage. With the religious spirit pervading many of their writings every devout mind must cordially sympathise. The names of such men as Barrow and Pearson can never be pronounced without a feeling of veneration. The piety of a Jeremy Taylor and of a Beveridge, and the eminent services of a Stillingfleet, a Tillotson, and a Wilkins, are in no danger of being forgotten by the Nonconformist students of English history. By such men the reasonable and truthful basis on which Christianity rests was nobly vindicated ; and its tendencies to purify and elevate the nature of man were so far developed that the shallow and profligate scepticism of the times was often effectually rebuked by them. We readily comprehend how, under such influences, a piety might be nurtured in men, like that of Sir John Evelyn ; and in women, like that of Lady Russell. We have no wish to underrate the good influences of this nature in the English church which survived the disastrous policy of 1662.

What was to have been expected.

But it is only too manifest that such persons as we have named were the exception, and not the rule, even among men of their own ecclesiastical position ; and that in relation to the clergy at large, their existence was as lights amidst the darkness. The aim of the men who gave the church of England her settlement by means of the Act of Uniformity, was to expel every Puritan element from her pale, as far as possible. This principle once accepted as a basis of their proceedings by the prelates and ruling statesmen at the Restoration, did much to determine the character of the future clergy. It was natural that the marks of a sound loyalty and of true churchmanship, should come to be something quite other

than a devout spirit, or great care about purity of life. Reaction commonly means passing from opposite to opposite, and it would be easy to imagine, if history had been silent on the subject, what the opposite of Puritanism would be in many cases.

One other circumstance should be remembered. The great men, and the squirearchy, of those days, while so zealous for the church, showed a great contempt for the clergy. There was wealth enough in that church to ensure a fair supply of scholarly men to fill bishops' sees and prebendal stalls. But nine-tenths of the ecclesiastics were men who lived and died in their parishes, were often miserably provided for, and very ill-used. As a consequence, they were for the most part coarse and vulgar men. There was not one in ten of them, we are told, who could make the figure of a gentleman.* But, poor as they were, they were proud of their office; and, little as seemed to be made of that office by their betters, they were always ready to make a bigot's resistance in defence of it, and in defence of the church from which they had derived it. The bishops at the Restoration had been allowed to appropriate a million and a half of money from the sale of leases, and other sources of profit.† But their poorer brethren were not suffered to share even in the crumbs which fell from that rich table. The result was a deteriorated clergy, and a pitiable pasturage for the flocks committed to their care. The village church may be a picturesque object in the landscape; and 'Sunday Morning,' in the hands of an artist, may present pleasant scenes from rural life. But the parishes of England knew little of such scenes during many long years after the Exodus of 1662. 'After we had cast out so much

What really came.

* Macaulay's *England*, i. 324.

† Burnet, i. 126.

BOOK III. 'faith, and zeal, and holiness,' says a high authority, 'after we had in this manner almost cast out the doctrine of Christ crucified from the pale of our church: we had to travel through a century of coldness, and dreariness, and barrenness, of Arminianism and Pelagianism, of Arianism and latent Socinianism, all which were found compatible with outward conformity, before the spirit which was then driven away returned with anything like the same power.'* Yes; the grand apostacy was not confined to the lower clergy, the higher shared in it. The former often became sensuous and immoral; the sins of the latter were, like those of the fallen angels, the sins of the intellect and of the higher passions. But we shall not attempt to conduct our readers through that 'century of coldness, and dreariness, and barrenness;' we prefer an effort to trace out the signs of life, which served, even in those days, to connect the piety of the age of Puritanism with our own.

How spiritual life was nurtured.

During the whole interval from the Restoration to the Revolution, though the law prohibited all preaching beyond the pulpits of the established church, the preaching among the Nonconformists may be said to have been continuous, at times openly, but more commonly in secret, and with every sort of precaution against detection.

* *Miscellaneous Pamphlets*, by Archdeacon Hare, 37. 'Religion in the church of England was almost extinguished, and in many of her parishes the lamp of God went out. The places of the ejected clergy were supplied with little regard even to the decencies of the sacred office; the voluptuous, the ignorant, the indolent, and even the profane, received episcopal orders, and like a swarm of locusts overspread the church. A few good men among the bishops and conforming clergy deplored in vain this devastation. Charles himself expressed his indignation, for profligate men are frequently among the first to perceive the shame of others.' Marsden's *Later Puritans*, 470.

Services under such circumstances were to the sufferers what similar services had been to the early Christians—as streams in the desert. Though sometimes few and far between, like the five loaves and the two small fishes, they were made to satisfy the hungry soul as by miracle. Christians in our day little imagine what the gathering together of a few kindred minds for such an object in such times really included. The absence often of the usual psalm, from the fear of being heard; the subdued voice of the preacher, for the same reason; the cover of the night, the hush and stillness laid over the pent-up emotion, all must have been felt to be fully understood. What passed was related to the absent; and the words of the preacher, carefully husbanded, were often repeated. Men and women who hazard natural liberty, and even natural life, for the sake of spiritual life, give signs of possessing that life in no ordinary vigour: and in these things, as the thirsting is, so the refreshment comes to be.

The ministers, too, shut out to so great a degree from the work of pulpit instruction, and from direct pastoral intercourse, availed themselves of such other means as were within their power to influence the mind of those from whom they were so cruelly separated. They wrote letters to such persons, full of friendly and pastoral counsels. But it was through the press that they made themselves to be especially felt. A large portion of the works which have come to us from their pen would never have existed, if the ordinary occupations of the pulpit and the pastorate had remained open to them. We may add, also, that those works would never have been read as we know they were, if it had been an easy thing to listen to the same instruction from the lips of the

BOOK III. authors. Affection is ingenious, and the old channel of communication being closed, the love of truth, both in writers and readers, rushed naturally along every other channel that could be made to give it passage. Hence the marvellous number of editions through which a work like Baxter's *Saint's Rest* was seen to pass. Hence the special wrath of Judge Jeffreys against this passion for scribbling so observable in such persons. Men sometimes wonder that modern divines do not publish more, and in the stately tome-fashion of that day. Let the persecution of that day return, and let there be only a comparatively free press, and a change in that respect would soon become manifest. It is not that we are fewer, nor that we have less power, that this difference has become observable. It is happily because we have all more to do in our natural fields of labour.

The Com-
prehension
Bill—why
a failure.

With the Toleration Bill, the ministry of William III. introduced their Comprehension Bill, which would have dispensed with subscription to the articles and homilies, and with some other matters often mentioned as exceptionable by Nonconformists. The failure of this scheme resulted from three causes. First—from the old prejudice of the cavalier party against making any concession to schismatics, especially such as should admit any considerable number of them into the church. Second—from the fact that the project would leave out more Nonconformists than it would take in, the Independents, Baptists, and Quakers being together more numerous than the Presbyterians. This circumstance, which made the bill unpopular with the latter class of religionists, made it little satisfactory to the statesmen. Third—from an apprehension on the part of some influential and liberal men, that the constitution already included too much

church; that an increase of the conformist clergy would be the increase of a power always to be found on the side of arbitrary government; and that a strong Nonconformity would be a very wholesome influence in relation to the cause both of religion and liberty. An eminent historian assures us that one reason why the project came to nothing was, that the leading Presbyterian divines in London possessed better incomes, and more social influence, as city pastors, than they could hope to obtain as vicars or rectors.* But we doubt the truth of that statement. The palmy state of things described may have existed afterwards, it did not exist then. It is certain that Calamy, the most considerable of those pastors, records his bitter regret over the ill-success of this effort.† From the causes mentioned, the bill was warmly opposed in some quarters, and but feebly supported in others. So its fate was sealed.

Through the reign of queen Anne the life of English Nonconformists was a struggle for existence. An ignorant, sensuous, and bigoted house of commons, and a people almost everywhere characterized by the same qualities, crush all resistance, and do according to their pleasure. The Tories, who had been comparatively passive under William, now resolved to attain office. Dr. Sacheverell, with his loud cry of the church in danger—shallow, vain, and unprincipled as he was—became a tool to their purpose. By descending to become the allies of that clerical demagogue they gained their object. Their ears were regaled by tidings of meeting-houses demolished by mobs, and of dissenters outraged and plundered in their own dwellings. Above all, they lived to see their Occasional Conformity Bill,

Retrocession under Anne.

* Macaulay iii. 97, 98.

† *History of the Dissenters*, i. 212-218.

BOOK III. and their Schism Bill become law. The first effectually expelled and excluded all dissenters from every kind of civil office; the second denied them the right to choose educators for their own children. The Occasional Conformity Bill did its work. The Schism Bill was to have come into force the day the queen breathed her last, and it died with her. The men who lived to the cause of grave principle through such times must have lived a martyr life. The elements to them were charged with antagonism, and with antagonism which sometimes broke in upon them with the force of a volcano. If to be reviled, and to have all manner of evil said of them falsely, was to be blessed, their blessedness must have been great. The pharisees were in high festival in those days. That viscount Bolingbroke, a known deist, should be minister of state, did not at all disturb them. But that Christian men, who happened to be dissenters, should be tide-waiters or excisemen, distressed their patriotism and piety inexpressibly. The mint and the rue were seen everywhere. Men who cared about the weightier matters were hard to find.

New relations of Church and State.

But this new rush of the old Restoration ideas, and of the mad passions connected with them, was to be their last conspicuous achievement. From 1714, they continue to exist, but they are balanced by other influences, and become only one element amidst others which begin to characterize the stream of English thought and life. The old relation of church and state was simple. The state was one, and the religion of the state was one. But after the struggle of a century that simplicity of relation ceases. In 1689, the law determines, by its Toleration Act, that in future, besides the one religious system which the state endows, there may be others which it

recognises and protects. So began our great principle of compromise between the endowed by law, and the simply recognised, protected—we may say, established by law. What was thus done in 1689, was to be conserved, developed, and expanded to our own time. But though the history of this principle was to be simply a history of progress, in other respects there was to be change.

The space between the death of queen Anne and the middle of the eighteenth century was an interval of great material progress in our history. In no former time had the people received so large a return for their labour. But in no other respect was it a season of prosperity. It was a time in which poetry sunk into dull prose; in which philosophy rarely soared above the material or the purely logical; in which the only earnestness existing took the direction of greed and indulgence; in which the public service was corrupt, the public morals were licentious, and the public language was profane. Selfishness and sensuousness seemed to be the only grand products possible. It will not be supposed that religion was an exception to the common degeneracy. Now it was that our deistical school of writers made their appearance, and that our philosophical school of divines was employed in answering them. There was much elaborate argument concerning the existence, perfectness, and government of God; much concerning the nature and obligation of virtue; and much designed to show the reasonableness of Christianity. But what Christianity really *is*, and what should be *done* with it, were questions strangely overlooked. With regard to the articles of the church of England, few clergymen seemed to believe in them, or to care about them. The high church party restricted their devotion to the Prayer

CHAP. III.

The age
of light
without
life.

BOOK III. Book and to ritualism. The low church, embracing a considerable array of learned dignitaries, were suspected of having verged far, not only towards Arminianism, but towards Pelagianism or Arianism. The press teemed with publications on these controversies. But it was observable everywhere, that the battle was not so much between religion and irreligion, as between a dry orthodoxy and a dead rationalism. There was light but no life. Great debating about religion, but no religion. The worldly had flooded over the spiritual, and had all but extinguished it.

Nonconformity suffers from declension in the Established Church.

It was not to be expected that Nonconformists would be uninfluenced by the spirit of the age. The strain of the long day of trial through which they had passed was over. They were now to be exposed to new forms of danger. External difficulty was succeeded by internal controversy. The recognised ministry among dissenters accounted it prudent to be great observers of regularity. To hold their own against the established clergy, who were always disposed to question the validity of their office, they were watchful to check tendencies towards eccentricity either in practice or doctrine.

A Methodist controversy.

Mr. Richard Davis, a Welshman, pastor of an Independent church at Rothwell, in Northamptonshire, possessed the spirit of a Whitfield, and surrendered himself to the promptings of his generous nature. His passion to proclaim his faith to the ignorant and the perishing, even by means of laymen and of humble artisans, scandalized the professional pride of his brethren. The bold man was not silenced by the formidable opposition made to him. But its effect was, that his kind of labour appears to have died with him. Under wiser influences, the great evangelical revival in England might

have dated from the former half of the eighteenth century, instead of the latter.

Contemporary with this dispute was the protracted Antinomian controversy, occasioned by the republication of Dr. Crisp's sermons. By many Independents, the ultra-Calvinistic doctrines in those discourses were zealously defended. More moderate and scriptural views were maintained by the Presbyterians. Through full seven years, much learning and labour were expended on this dispute, which might have been far better employed. But the extreme opinions on this subject were so effectually checked as to become less observable from that time.

These controversies, however, were of limited significance, compared with that which arose in the west of England. Early in this century, William Whiston, professor of mathematics in Cambridge, became enamoured with the Arian hypothesis. His expulsion from the university on that account, in 1710, drew great attention to the subject. Two years later, Dr. Samuel Clarke issued his volume on the Trinity, which added greatly to the existing excitement. The effect of those publications, though coming from churchmen, was most observable among dissenters—the adoption of such opinions by a dissenting minister being sure to awaken suspicion, and to lead to discussion and division. In Exeter, two Presbyterian divines, Mr. Hallett and Mr. Peirce, embraced the Arian creed. Mr. Hallett had been a pastor in that city since 1689, and had the charge of an academy in which young men were educated for the ministry. Mr. Peirce was a man of eminent influence and ability. Attempts made to remove suspicion concerning the orthodoxy of these persons sufficed to show that the suspicions were well founded; and in

CHAP. III

Trouble
from Anti-
nomianismThe Arian
controversy

BOOK III. the end, they were obliged to resign their connexion with the pulpits they had occupied.

The orthodox dissenters in the west had solicited the counsel and assistance of their brethren in London, which led to the disclosure that in the metropolis, also, a serious division of opinion had taken place. Mr. Peirce resented a request to clear himself from suspicion by an avowal of his faith, as being inquisitorial and oppressive. The substance of his defence was, that his people were concerned with what he taught, not with what he believed. This, in fact, was the ground generally taken by persons in the same circumstances, not only in Devon and Cornwall, but in London. It was now widely believed, both in town and country, that some men were occupying orthodox pulpits who had long ceased to be orthodox. The effect was distrust among the people, a controversial tone in the pulpit and elsewhere, and a great loss of spiritual life. The number, indeed, of the ministers against whom proof of heterodoxy could be brought, was found to be much smaller than had been apprehended. But the seed was so effectually sown, in many instances among the students for the ministry, that in the generation which had grown up on the accession of George III., the dissenters who passed as Presbyterians were generally known to have deserted the faith of their fathers, and with the change of their faith, came that loss of numbers, and loss of power, which have characterized them to this day.

Decline of
the Presby-
terians.

The strength lost by the Presbyterians passed largely to the Independents. It was in the power of heterodox trustees to retain possession of edifices which had been raised by the contributions of orthodox Presbyterians. But in all such cases, the people more or less withdrew,

reared other structures, formed churches on the Congregational model, and in connexion with that polity, perpetuated the religious faith and the religious life which had descended to them from the confessors of 1662. In this line the succession has not failed. The genealogical tree still grows, and will grow. Men like Watts and Doddridge were to do much towards linking the faith and feeling of the past with the present. Would we could induce the living representatives of those changed Presbyterians to look wisely at what has followed from that change, and to reconsider their ways. There are no men living in whom there is a finer sense of truthfulness and honour, than in our English Unitarians. Nor is there any religious body who has to pay so great a price as the cost of following their convictions.

From the middle of the last century, we trace the origin of the great Evangelical movement associated with the names of Whitfield, and Wesley, and other good men. At that time Evangelical Nonconformists, though not essentially weak, were relatively so. The manner in which religious life had been passing away from the Established Church during the last forty years, and the serious defection from their own ranks among the Presbyterians, left them a diminished remnant, without the prestige or the power necessary to make any perceptible impression on the abounding formalism, prejudice, and grossness. They deeply lamented the brutish condition of the common people, the essentially worldly spirit which pervaded all classes. They deliberated and wrote concerning the best means of dealing with the evils of the times. They aimed to diffuse a Christian influence, as far as they could, in their respective neighbourhoods. But, after all, their piety—as was

Nonconformity before the rise of Methodism.

BOOK III. not unnatural in their circumstances—was largely a domestic piety. In their own households, their daily life was often regulated and imbued in an eminent degree by a feeling of devotedness. When great evil is abroad, there are many minds which will be sure to be keepers at home. Their dwelling is their sanctuary, in which they would fain hide themselves until the dark days are passed.*

Methodism.

But this well-ordered and quiet sanctity was not all that was needed. Something much more bold and aggressive was required. Whence was it to come? The clergy of that day, indolent enough as to all good, had been so assiduous in training the church-going people into a hatred of every form of dissent, that it is hardly too much to say deliverance could not come from that

* The following passage describes the life of one of those old Nonconformist families—the family of Sir Thomas and Lady Abney, where Dr. Watts so long found a genial home:—‘Here were every morning and evening praise, and reading of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord’s day he strictly observed and sanctified. God was solemnly sought and worshipped, both before and after the family’s attendance on public ordinances. The repetition of sermons, the reading of good books, the instruction of the household, and the singing of the divine praises together, were much of the several employments of the holy day; variety and brevity making the whole not burdensome, but pleasant, leaving at the same time room for the devotions of the closet, as well as for intervening works of necessity and mercy. Persons coming into such a family with a serious tincture of mind, might well cry out, “This is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven!” Beside the ordinary and stated services of religion, occasional calls and seasons for worship were much regarded. In signal family mercies and affliction, in going journeys, in undertaking and accomplishing matters of great moment, God was especially owned by prayer and thanksgiving, the assistance of ministers being often called in on such occasions. Through the whole course of his life he was priest of his own family, except when a minister happened to be present.’ Gibbon’s *Life of Watts*, 103.

quarter. English Puritanism made George Whitfield and John Wesley what they were, and in so far Puritanism was the parent of Methodism. But Whitfield and Wesley were clergymen, and that fact alone swept away a huge mass of prejudice. They were Oxford men. They preached in gown and bands. They were always ready to use the church liturgy. They would not hold service in church hours. They admonished their hearers that they were not to cease to be good church people. In their early days, all these things contributed largely to smooth their way before them. Dissenters, on the contrary, were attached to forms of polity and worship which had become theirs at a great price, and which it was both natural and right in them not to abandon. But, if the Nonconformists were not to do the work of Methodism, they were to do much by their general influence towards giving existence to that potent agency; and were to receive their own again as with usury from that quarter, in more recent times.

Not that Methodism, even in the evangelical sense, was simply a perpetuated Puritanism. It had a phase of its own. It may be called a second reformation; but its great doctrine was not the great doctrine of the first reformation. In the place of justification by faith, came the doctrine of the new birth. Luther had to take the soul out of the hands of the priest, by giving it a sense of pardon and safety independent of the services of that functionary. But the evil spirit to be expelled by Whitfield and Wesley was formalism. One was a Calvinist, the other an Arminian; but their aim as preachers is the same—to vitalize an admitted creed, to ensure that church-going shall lead to the church of Christ. They left metaphysics to philosophers, and history to histo-

Special mis-
sion of Me-
thodism.

BOOK III. rians, and preached the means of a great moral and spiritual reñovation to those who needed it. That was 'the present truth' for their time, and it did its work. From that day the stream of English Nonconformity widens without ceasing to our own time.

Retrospect. We have seen, then, what the policy of the Anglican church has been from the days of Elizabeth. To this hour it remains unchanged. Those old Tudor and Stuart forms of thought concerning matters theological and ecclesiastical are still imposed upon us. We cannot, it seems, amend what was then done. We cannot know anything which was not then known. That past must be our present. And what has followed from this Chinese philosophy? Every second worshipper in the kingdom is a Nonconformist; and a large majority of Nonconformists have come to be opposed, not merely to the formularies of the church of England, but to the principle on which all such church rest. The action of the civil power in reference to religion in our history has been such as to have forced thoughtful and conscientious men to ask many curious questions in relation to it. The result is, that in place of praying that the exercise of this sort of authority may be considerate and humane, they have come to pronounce the authority itself a mistake—a great and terrible mistake. To such persons the words RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION possess a dark, magic power. They call up to the eye of the imagination chambers of horror, which cover many lands, and come down from many ages, and they point to the vision as it passes and say, of all that poor humanity would have known nothing, and of the shame of all that Christ's religion would have known nothing, had civil rulers been content to leave religion to conscience and to

God. It may be said, but think of the good which has come from that source. We answer—if you take the principle at all you must take it with all its sins upon its head, and who in this case is to weigh the evil against the good, and to show the good that has been prevented along with the good that has been done? Surely a principle which is accountable for everything included in that hell-chapter in the world's history—religious persecution—is a tree to be known by its fruits. Many good men do not look at this principle in such relations; but in the name of charity let there be a little forbearance towards those who cannot avoid so looking at it, and who denounce it accordingly.

When we plead that religion should be left to the individual conscience, we do not plead for a senseless individualism. Every man is bound to avail himself reverentially of all the sources of conviction within his reach; and in innumerable ways is to subordinate the less to the greater, for the sake of united action. But to deny that the *ultimate* decision on all grave questions should be with the personal judgment, would be to put an end to individual responsibility, and to introduce a remedy much worse than the disease. The right of private judgment, properly understood, is opposed to the abuse of authority, not to the use of it. But in religion, if there is not individual liberty, there is no liberty. 'A free church in a free state,' said Count Cavour, in his last moments. Good—so far as it goes. But the great thinkers in France are looking beyond the Italians on this question, and are ready to adopt as their watchword, 'freedom of *religion*.' It would be easy to show that the doctrine of personal right and liberty, proclaimed long since by our Independent forefathers, is

BOOK III. commending itself apace to the advanced intelligence of Europe.

Nonconformists suffer little now from bad laws. That stage of evil is happily passed away. But let not our Episcopalian neighbours account it strange if there are still signs of discontent among us. Churchmen cannot persecute us after the manner of their fathers, but they often persecute us bitterly after a manner of their own. The many forms of social disparagement, disownment, and wrong to which Nonconformists are exposed as such, it would require large space to describe. So long as our Established Church shall continue to be the great vested interest it is, so long, in ten thousand quarters, all that can be done to discredit, to depress, and to crush us, will be done. Our very strength subjects us to penalty. A weak dissent might be despised; a strong dissent is an object of fear, and we all know what the courses are to which fear generally prompts. Were the Episcopalian church in England a free and self-sustained church, the motive to this policy would cease, and the policy would come to an end. But the cause is not likely to be removed, and so long as human nature is what it is, a church conditioned as the church of England now is, will be sure to be, to a large extent, a persecuting church. We may be told that we profess to be Christians, and should know how to bear these things. No doubt we should, and we must try to do so—but let our friends bear in mind that we are men, and not angels.

APPENDIX.



I.

GREAT censure has been cast on some of the New England settlers on account of some of their proceedings towards the natives. In the spring of 1623, Winslow, the governor of New Plymouth, visited the friendly chief Massasoit, who was supposed to be in mortal sickness. Winslow became his physician, his nurse, and his cook; and by his humane assiduity the sufferer was brought back as from the gates of death. The chief, in the fulness of his gratitude, disclosed to the governor, that in consequence of some injury from certain disorderly settlers at Wessagusset, a place at some distance from New Plymouth, a widespread conspiracy had grown up among the natives against the whites, who were all to be destroyed. Other circumstances corroborated this disclosure. Only the year before a similar plot had been entered into in Virginia, and three hundred and fifty settlers, including women and children, were put to death without any sort of warning. The governor communicated the intelligence to the whole company, and asked their advice. 'The company referred the matter back to 'the governor, the assistant, and the captain. These consulted 'among themselves, and with others, and concluded that the preservation of the settlement depended upon energetic measures. Being 'guiltless of injury, they had no peaceable way to accommodation and 'security; having done nothing to provoke the assault which impended, 'they could only escape by anticipating it. To strike a blow such 'as their little strength was equal to, and such at the same time as 'would be widely known, and make an effective impression, Standish 'was despatched by water, with eight men, to the central point of

‘discontent at Wessagusset. Here he found Wituwamat, the emissary who, as he believed, had intended to murder him at Manomet. Encountering this savage and three others, Standish and two of his men put them to death, after a closely contested fight, without fire-arms. One of the four they hanged. Not far off they killed another, and Weston’s men two more. The object was accomplished. The rest of the natives, in terror, dispersed into the woods. A prisoner made full confession of the plot.’ Palfrey’s *History of New England*, i. 200-203. This is the case on which the pious Robinson wrote, saying, ‘Oh! how happy would it have been if you had converted some before you had killed any!’ Bradford, 164. Palfrey is a good authority in such a matter, and the reader will see that the charge of pure murder, coupled with treachery, has no place in his narrative.

The other material matter relates to the war of the New Englanders with the Pequot Indians. The Pequots were the terror of all the other native tribes. In 1633, a number of savages of that nation fell upon two English merchants and six seamen in the Connecticut river, and put them to death. Redress was demanded, and promised, but never made. In 1636, another party had seized an English vessel, and had murdered captain and crew. Saccasus, the chief of the Pequots, was called upon to punish this wrong. But his deputies shot their arrows at the persons who made the demand, and the chief began to make the most strenuous effort to induce the Mohegans and the Narragansetts, his neighbours, to join him. This accomplished, his hope was to see an end to the race of white men in those regions. Thanks in part to the noble-hearted Roger Williams, Saccasus was foiled in this policy. But though he saw he should have to make war alone, he prosecuted his hostilities in the manner of a man who believed himself strong enough to give execution to his murderous purposes.

‘In the autumn they caught one Butterfield, near Gardiner’s garrison, and he was never heard of more. A few days after they took two men out of a boat, and murdered them with ingenious barbarity, cutting off first the hands of one of them, then his feet.* All

* This victim was John Tilley, formerly overseer for the Dorchester Company, at Fort Ann, ‘a very stout man, and of great understanding.’—(Winthrop, I. 200). ‘He lived three days after his hands were cut off.’—(*Ibid.*) Tilley’s companion fared yet worse. His captors ‘tied him to a stake, flayed his skin off, put hot embers between the flesh and skin, cut off his fingers and toes, and made hat-bands of them.’—Underhill, *News*, &c. 23.

‘ winter a marauding party kept near the fort, of which they burned
 ‘ the outbuildings and the hay, and killed the cattle.* Towards
 ‘ spring, Gardiner went out with ten men for some farming work.
 ‘ They were waylaid by the Indians, and three of them were slain.†
 ‘ Soon after, two men sailing down the river were stopped, and
 ‘ horribly mutilated and mangled; their bodies were cut in two length-
 ‘ wise, and the parts hung up by the river’s bank.‡ A man who had
 ‘ been carried off from Westhersfield was roasted alive.§ All doubt as
 ‘ to the necessity of vigorous action was over, when a band of
 ‘ one hundred Pequots attacked that place, killed seven men, a
 ‘ woman, and a child, and carried away two girls. They had now
 ‘ put to death no less than thirty of the English.

‘ The two hundred and fifty men in the Connecticut towns were
 ‘ surrounded by Indian tribes, who, from their hunting grounds
 ‘ between Hudson River and Narragansett Bay, could, if united, have
 ‘ fallen upon them with a force of at least four or five thousand
 ‘ warriors. The Pequots, already engaged in open hostility against
 ‘ them, numbered not fewer than a thousand fighting men. It was but
 ‘ too probable that the friendship of the other tribes would not long
 ‘ be proof against the seductions by which they continued to be plied.
 ‘ There seemed no alternative for the distressed colonists except their
 ‘ own speedy extermination, or a sudden exercise of courage and con-
 ‘ duct that should crush the assailants. Women and children were not
 ‘ to be abandoned to savage cruelty, the new light of civilization in
 ‘ Connecticut was not to be extinguished, if the desperate valour of a
 ‘ few stout men could save them. And if a bold movement should
 ‘ succeed, it might break up the dangerous negotiations which had
 ‘ been on foot, and entail a lasting security and peace. The English-
 ‘ men who made the attack on the principal fort of the Pequots were
 ‘ but seventy-seven in number from all points. Little dependence
 ‘ could be placed on the natives who were professedly with them.
 ‘ But the fort was entered at opposite points by moonlight, by surprise;
 ‘ and within an hour all within that enclosure perished by fire or
 ‘ sword, with the exception of not more than four or five.’ It was
 no doubt a terrible spectacle which that sunrise presented. But
 we have no sympathy with those who seem to say that these men

* Winthrop, I. 198.

† Gardiner, *Relation*, &c., in *Mass. Hist. Coll.* xxiii. 143.

‡ Trumbull, *History of Connecticut*, I. 76.

§ Gardiner, *Relation*, &c., in *Mass. Hist. Coll.* xxiii. 143.

should have had more pity on the bloodstained savages before them than on each other, or on their own wives and little ones. Their choice seemed to be to slay or to be slain. ‘From the hour of that carnage,’ says the historian, ‘Connecticut was secure. There could now be unguarded sleep in the long harassed homes of the settlers.’ Palfrey’s *History of England*, i. 456-467.*

II.

1. It should be remembered that Dr. Walker prepared his volume for publication during the reign of Queen Anne, when the high-fliers, as they were called, among the Anglican clergy, after being repressed for a while by the strong hand of William III., made haste to avenge themselves on all Whigs and Nonconformists. The author of the ‘Sufferings of the Clergy’ had his place with the most zealot class in that age of clerical zealotry—with men who gloried in having provided that no dissenter should be allowed to gauge a spirit cask in the service of the government, or to hold a staff in the service of a corporation; and who had made it to be law that no Nonconformist should have liberty to choose an educator for his own children! Moreover, while Tory prelates and squires did such things, Tory mobs ransacked meeting-houses, and invaded the hearths of dissenters for the purpose of insult and plunder. Dr. Walker, so far from seeing anything to censure in these things, points to the history of that clerical charlatan and fire-brand, Dr. Sacheverel, as illustrating the wrong that might be done ‘to a regular clergyman, of known zeal and affection,’ by the wickedness of the times!

2. Dr. Calamy, when informed that Dr. Walker was about to publish, expressed his doubt as to the probable fairness and value of the performance.* One of his clerical friends rebuked him on that account, and said he should hope better things. But when the volume appeared, that clergyman lost no time in conveying to Dr. Calamy, and to the public, his sense of disappointment on reading it. ‘When I first read ‘Dr. Walker’s circular letter to the Archdeacons,’ he says, ‘I fancied he intended to give us an account of those worthy men who, in the time of the Civil War and Usurpation, were persecuted for righteousness’

* *Continuation of the Account*, Vol. II. Church and Dissenters.

'sake, and lost all that they could not keep with a good conscience for the sake of their duty to God and the king. But instead of what I expected it to be, I saw a huge heap of the most heterogeneous characters, and, like the Popish head-roll of their saints and martyrs, a great many of them much more deserving to have their names blotted out than their memory to be preserved.' The clergyman who so wrote was Mr. Lewis, of Margate, a gentleman who acquired considerable reputation among his contemporaries by his 'Life of Wiclif,' his 'Life of Bishop Peacocke,' his 'History of the English Translations of the Bible,' and other publications on historical and antiquarian subjects. One of his brethren, in a sermon in St. Paul's, said the 'Sufferings of the Clergy' should be placed in all churches beside the 'Book of Martyrs.' Mr. Lewis published a rebuke of the suggestion. Defile not the sacred place, he said, by bringing 'such a farrago of false and senseless legends into it.' Mr. Withers, one of the Exeter clergy, well known to the literature of that time, and who tested many of Dr. Walker's statements, denounced his representations generally, as constituting 'one of the most scurrilous libels that ever yet appeared in folio.' There were men who praised Dr. Walker then, and there are such now, but they were not the men of candour in their generation. Some of Dr. Walker's representations, says Mr. Lewis, are so extravagant, that 'one would imagine when the author so wrote he was in Flamstead's dark room, where he shows people objects all reversed.'*

3. Dr. Calamy avails himself of aid from the Mr. Withers above-named, on the vexed question concerning the numbers of the sequestered clergy. 'Mr. Withers,' says the Doctor, 'has made a computation as to three of the Associated counties, viz., Suffolk, Norfolk, and Cambridgeshire, in which there were 1,398 parishes and 253 sequestrations. So that not a fifth part of the livings were sequestered. And taking these three counties as a standard by which to measure the whole kingdom, the number of sufferers would be less than 2,000, supposing of the 9,284 there were less than a fifth part sequestered.' Dr. Calamy says, and has a right to say, that these and similar results, extended from the counties mentioned to the whole kingdom, warrant the conclusion that the number of the clergy sequestered from the parishes of England before 1660 was less, and not greater, than the number of the ministers ejected then and afterwards. Moreover, in the case of half the sequestered, the sequestration was not permanent.

* Continuation of the Account. Church and Dissenters.

I have reckoned the ministers ejected to give place to sequestered ministers still living at about one fifth of the whole. From the inquiries made by Mr. Withers in Devonshire, in consequence of Walker's representations, it was found that of the 120 ejected in that county, 22 only were ejected in 1660, to make room for the former incumbents. This fact tends to confirm my view on this question, as stated elsewhere. It should not be forgotten that the rights of patrons were uniformly recognised, both under the Long Parliament and the Commonwealth; and that all who were not ejected in 1660 were recognised by an act of parliament as having a valid right to their livings.

4. Opposed to Dr. Walker's frequent exaggerations concerning the sufferings of the clergy, and other matters, Dr. Calamy gives the following passage from an aged clergyman who had lived through those times. Speaking of Dr. Walker, this clergyman (Mr. Stephens, of Sutton, Bedfordshire) says—'This author frequently falls foul on the memory of those ministers who were put into the sequestered livings, and tells strange stories of many, to make them infamous, which I cannot give any credit to. Though I knew but few of the sequestered clergy, yet I knew several of their immediate successors, some in Lincolnshire and some in Leicestershire, all which were valuable for their education, ministerial abilities, and prudent conduct. It is well if those parishes have now such faithful pastors, which I much doubt.' 'This same person,' says Calamy, 'gave me to understand that he knew some ministers whose qualifications for the office were very mean, who were loose in their lives, and disaffected to the parliament cause and proceedings, and yet kept in their livings all those times, though their livings were of good value.' Calamy's informant made him acquainted with some things concerning Dr. Sanderson, afterwards bishop, whose alleged sufferings have been a stock accusation in some quarters, which should be mentioned. 'He stated,' says Calamy, 'that to his knowledge the doctor was far from being reduced to any poverty in those times, nor was he in a pitiful condition in 1658. He lived in as much plenty as the better sort of clergy did, upon his rectory, and maintained his children fashionably.' 'This same person,' says Calamy, 'tells me he was present in 1656, when the doctor married a couple by the Common Prayer Book, and read the Confession and Absolution, &c., many of the gentry being present; and that he never heard before that he was plundered, or had any violence offered to him.'

The Rev. T. W. Davids, of Colchester, has been prosecuting researches on this subject in relation to the county of Essex during the past twelve months. The result is to show that the 'scandalous' men in Kent were matched in delinquencies by a similar class in Essex. 'Assuming,' says Mr. Davids, 'what took place in Essex to be a fair sample of what took place throughout the country generally, I cannot find that any clergyman was sequestered for Episcopacy; no man for the Protestation only, or the Covenant; no man only for the Prayer Book; no man only for royalism. Livings only were sequestered, either because the incumbent was incapable, or because he was immoral, or because he was malignant, aiding and abetting treason to the state; or because he had abandoned his cure, and left it unprovided for, for some considerable length of time; or else, because he was a pluralist, in which case he was still permitted to retain one benefice. The rule was, that no clergyman who was of decent character, and kept himself from open and avowed seditiousness, was so much as disturbed. Samuel Collins, the vicar of Braintree, a known personal friend of Laud's, who refused the Protestation and the Covenant, and whose royalism was notorious, retained his vicarage until he died; and John Ganden, the rector of Bocking, who, it is only just to say, made no secret of his sympathies with king and prelate, retained his also, even to the Restoration.* I have mentioned elsewhere the case of Brian Walton, of which much has been made. Walton was a pluralist. Besides the rectory of Sandon, he held the living of St. Martin Orgars, in the City of London, and the prebend of Twyford, in St. Paul's Cathedral. He was petitioned against by his parishioners as 'a man of unquiet and unpeaceable carriage, persecuting such of his parishioners as are not of his way of thinking, neither preaching afternoons nor allowing his parishioners to procure a preacher at their own charge; as extorting the *ex officio* oath from his parishioners; and as contemptuously aspersing the persons of quality and worth which at this time serve the Commonwealth in parliament.' There is no reason to doubt the truth of this representation, nor any room to be greatly surprised at what followed. Walton was a learned man, but even more than is here stated against him was true.

The above are only samples of the material at hand, which, if brought into requisition for the purpose, would suffice to demonstrate the utter worthlessness of Dr. Walker as an authority.

* *Report of a Public Meeting in Bocking, August 25. Jackson, Walford, and Hodder.*

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